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WALTER BEN HARE

SUNSHINE



A COMEDY WITH MUSIC

Walter H. Baker Company, Boston

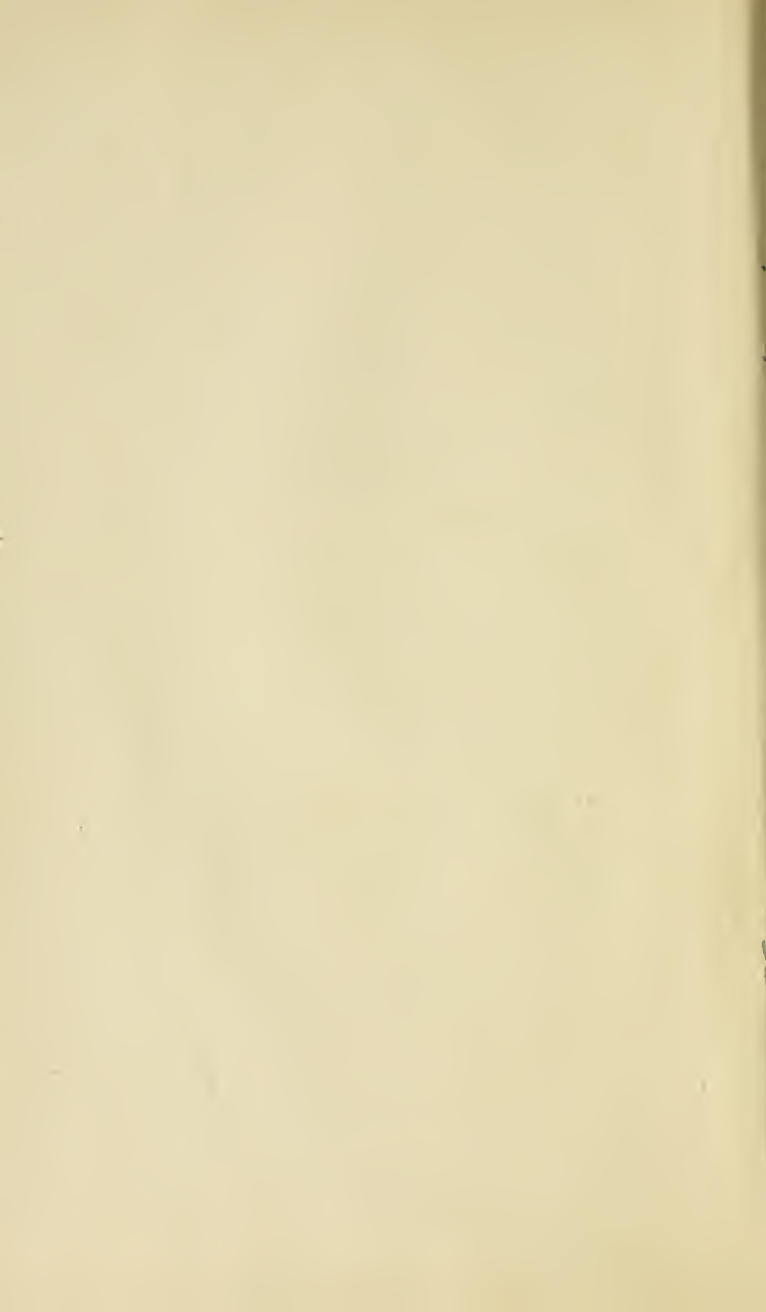


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SUNSHINE



SUNSHINE

A Comedy With Music

A Tonic for the Glooms in Three Acts

By

WALTER BEN HARE

*Author of more than one hundred plays, including
"A Couple of Million," "Professor Pepp," "Old
Days in Dixie," "The Adventures of Grandpa,"
"Over Here," "Much Ado About Betty," "The
Hoodoo," "Teddy, or, the Runaways," "The
Dutch Detective," "And Billy Dis-
appeared," etc.*



WALTER H. BAKER COMPANY
Publishers of Things Theatrical
BOSTON, MASS.

1922

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no 1

SUNSHINE

CHARACTERS

MAUDELIA McCANN, *aged ten.*

MRS. BUNCH McCANN, *of Detroit, the mother.*

MRS. SOL WHIPPLE, *of Whipple's Corners, Conn., the country lady.*

MISS TESSIE MITFORD, *the mental case.*

MR. JUBA K. BUTTERNIP, *of Peoria, Ill., the old man.*

MISS GREGORY, *the nurse.*

BUDDY BRADY, *of New York, the ball player.*

MAJOR KELLICOTT, *the speculator.*

JIM ANTHONY, *he's engaged.*

SYLVIA DEANE, *she's engaged.*

MARY, "*Sunshine.*"

Men, Boys and Girls.

SCENE.—The lawn at Sunshine Sanitarium, near New York City.

ACT I.—Morning.

ACT II.—Afternoon.

ACT III.—Night.

TIME OF PLAYING.—Approximately two hours.

COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS

MAUDELIA. A pert little girl of about ten. For the Prologue she wears an old-fashioned dress with hoop-skirts and poke bonnet, all in yellow. In ACT II she wears a little girl's play dress, torn and dirty, an old tam or hat, and torn stockings. In ACT III she wears a pretty party dress.

MRS. McCANN. A large commanding society woman of about thirty-eight. Handsome dresses, changing for each act.

MRS. WHIPPLE. A little old-fashioned country woman in rusty black. Small black bonnet. Reticule and old-fashioned spectacles. Gray hair.

TESSIE. A dramatic part calling for careful rehearsing and acting. A girl about twenty. Handsome costumes, rather fanciful.

BUTTERNIP. White wig, whiskers and moustache. Neat old man's suit, dressing-gown and skull cap.

MISS GREGORY. Nurse's costume.

BUDDY. A lively young fellow of twenty-three. Neat costumes, rather loud.

MAJOR. Pompous, mature-looking man of forty-five. Very well dressed. Cane.

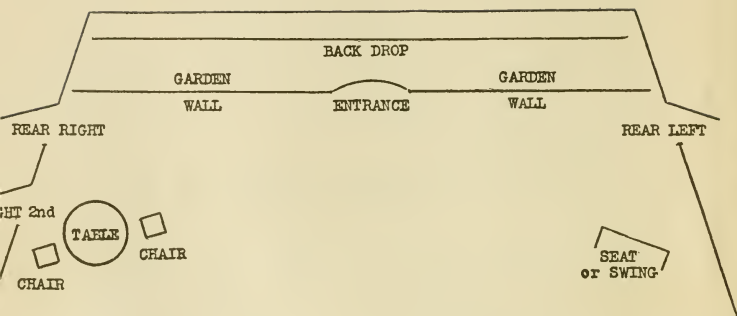
JIM. Similar to Buddy. Change costumes for each act.

SYLVIA. A pretty girl of eighteen. Handsome costumes suitable to the occasion.

MARY. Emotional leading lady. Age about twenty-three. Nurse's dress to change to plain old-fashioned street dress and hat.

LIST OF PROPERTIES

- Fancy seat or swing.
- Garden table with one glass (tonic) on plate.
- Two garden chairs. Pillow in chair R. of table.
- Glass of lemonade and straw for Mrs. Whipple.
- Fancy work for Mrs. McCann.
- Wheel chair.
- Bottle of tonic and spoon for Nurse.
- Watches for Nurse, Major and Buddy.
- Large cheap-looking grip for Mary.
- Small fish on a string for Maudelia. (Cloth fish.)
- Long cloth for table in ACT II.
- Ring for Sylvia.
- Hand-bell on the table in ACT II.
- Large bird-cage for Mrs. Whipple with a cloth over it.
- A live cat.
- Red flannel bandage and white linen bandage for Butternip.
- Ice for Butternip.
- Document, check and fountain pen for Major.
- Large white pillow for Nurse.
- Two golf balls for ACT III.
- Japanese lanterns for ACT III.



S T A G E S E T T I N G

THE PROLOGUE

Just before the play begins The Prologue, MAUDELIA looks in from L., puts her fingers to her lips and says "Shh!" Piano music very soft. She moves slowly to C., standing in front of the curtain. Again she says "Shh!" The piano gives a chord as she curtseys, and plays softly as she recites.

Ye lords and ladies who have gathered here
To see our little comedy of cheer,
I bid you welcome to the Sunshine play,
And hope 'twill drive your troubles all away.

No Barrymores or Pickfords grace our show,
But simple lads and lassies whom you know.
And when you leave, each one of you must say,
"They did their best to make us like the play."

For weeks we've worked for this one night's success.
If approbation should our efforts bless
We'll be rewarded if you say, "Well done!"
So come with us into the land of Fun.

And now a final word before we part,
[*Moves toward L.*
We'll give the play, but you must do your part.
Don't sit there silent, looking bored and glum,
And half-way wishing that you hadn't come. [*At L.*

Get in the spirit of the Sunshine play,
Relax and smile, be jovial and gay,
Forget the tax, the H. C. L. and fraud,
But don't forget to laugh . . . and to applaud.
[*The last three words should be given very distinctly; she then curtseys and exits at L.*

SUNSHINE

ACT I

SCENE.—*The lawn at the Sunshine Sanitarium. Exterior backing of grove, landscape or sea. About three feet in front of the back drop is a wall of stone or brick running across the stage from L. to R. This wall is about four feet high and has a center entrance, preferably arched. This wall adds to the general effect of the scene, but is not necessary. Entrance to a house appears down R. 2. Two steps and two large white columns (of bristol board) make an effective entrance. Wood wings at L. Natural boughs and small trees may be attached to the sides of the stage with the foliage visible to the audience. A similar effect may be arranged behind the wall. Potted plants and flowers appear at the foot of the wall and around the entrance to the house, the pots masked with green leaves. Grass mats and scattered leaves are strewn around the stage. Fancy garden seat or swing down L. Rustic table and chairs down R. C. Natural vines with artificial flowers attached cover the wall and the base of one of the columns. Brilliant yellow light floods the stage from L.*

As the curtain rises, MRS. WHIPPLE is discovered

seated at the R. of the table sipping a glass of lemonade through a straw. MRS. McCANN is seated at the L. of the table engaged in fancy work.

Before the curtain rises the orchestra plays the first verse and chorus of Olcott's song, "Mother Machree," and then repeats the chorus very softly with MARY singing the words off stage at R. 2. The curtain rises slowly on words "that shines in your hair." MRS. WHIPPLE and MRS. McCANN look toward R. 2 as MARY finishes the chorus in a clear, sweet voice. Music ends.

MRS. McCANN.

That's Sunshine. It's as good as a tonic to hear her singing there in the Infirmary.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

They took her away from me last Thursday and put that little red-headed nurse in her place. It gave me a backset, I know it did. I'll be here in the Sanitarium for months now. Red-headed persons always get on my nerves. You know how it is. [*On the verge of tears.*] I offered the doctor five dollars extra to put Sunshine back on my case, but he wouldn't listen to me. [*Tearfully.*] And he gave me a red-headed nurse. I'm getting worse every day, and it's all her fault. Red-headed people are *so* unsympathetic.

MRS. McCANN.

When you've gone through with all I've gone through, you won't mind the color of your nurse's hair. They just keep removing my bones one at a time. The Superintendent said that my case was absolutely unique. They've never had anything like it

in the Sanitarium before. I can't eat a thing except scraped beef.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

I can't take any nourishment at all. But I'd be a well woman inside of a week if I didn't have that red-headed nurse. [*Tearfully.*] If your nerves were all on edge like mine are, you'd sympathize with me. I have a good notion to leave here and go to the Bingham Hospital.

MRS. McCANN.

The Bingham Hospital. Oh, my dear! I was there once. They take *mental* cases; some of them have to be kept in straight-jackets. You may rest assured there's no insanity here.

[*Enter* TESSIE MITFORD *from* REAR L., *with both hands raised dramatically. She pauses at* REAR C.

TESSIE.

Tell me, have they found a clue yet?

MRS. WHIPPLE.

[*Severely.*] Where's your nurse?

TESSIE.

I gave her the slip. [*She laughs slyly.*] It was easy. An aviator came to my window in an aeroplane and I simply got in and flew away. I always do that on Monday. They are so stupid here. They can't even find a clue, but I'll search and I'll search until I find something. [*She comes down c., near the table.*] I'm sure the man was poisoned, but I can't prove it until I find a clue. [*Takes* MRS. WHIPPLE'S *lemonade.*] Maybe this will help me. [*Drinks it greedily.*] No, it's too sour. [*Replaces*

the empty glass on the table.] I'll have to search elsewhere. [*Crosses to R.*] I'm going to bore a hole through the floor in the Infirmary and climb down into the cellar. Don't tell anyone you saw me. [*Finger to lips.*] Shh! Mum's the word. I know where there's a nest of butterflies. Maybe I can find a clue there. Don't tell a soul. [*At the door of the house.*] Not a word, girls, not a word. Shh!
 [Exit, R. 2.]

MRS. WHIPPLE.

[*Sarcastically.*] Oh, no, there's no insanity here. Not at all. She simply has a slight touch of the ear-ache, that's all.

MRS. McCANN.

They generally have a nurse with her. Poor thing, she imagines she's a detective. She's always looking for a clue.

BUTTERNIP.

[*Outside at REAR L., peevisly.*] Don't jolt me. Don't jolt me, I say. You know I can't bear to be jolted.

[*Enter NURSE GREGORY from REAR L., wheeling in MR. BUTTERNIP. She wheels him down L. C.*]

NURSE.

I didn't jolt you.

BUTTERNIP.

Didn't jolt me? I dunno what else you'd call it. I can't bear to be jolted. You jerk this chair up and down like a two-horse-power Ford.

NURSE.

The idea! I'm rolling you just as easy.

BUTTERNIP.

I'm sick of this wheel chair. Can't I get out of it and sit down like an ordinary being? I want to sit over there. [*Points to seat down L.*]

NURSE.

Do you feel strong enough?

BUTTERNIP.

I'm as strong as an ox. I'll bet I'm the strongest man in the Sanitarium.

MRS. McCANN.

[*Rises, places fancy work in her chair and crosses to NURSE.*] Nurse, have you seen anything of my little Maudelia this morning?

NURSE.

Yes, she's down by the shore with Nurse Marjorie.

MRS. McCANN.

[*Crosses to REAR L., looks off stage.*] My, I hope she doesn't allow her to go in the water. She's so frail.

BUTTERNIP.

There! Lift me! [*NURSE lifts him.*] Careful now. Don't jolt me. Madam, I said not to jolt me. I can stand by myself. [*Tries it, totters.*] Catch me, catch me. I want to sit over there. [*Points to the chair formerly occupied by MRS. McCANN.*] I want to get the sun.

[*NURSE moves him to the chair; he seems very weak and moving about two inches at a time.*]

SUNSHINE

NURSE.

Steady, now. Use your feet more. I can't carry you. Can't you use your feet?

BUTTERNIP.

Certainly I can use my feet, but I don't want to be jolted. Slow now. Take it slow. No use to hurry. Take it slow. [*At chair.*] Easy now, let me down gently. Gently, now. There. Don't jolt me. [*Sits.*] There. Owww!

[*Jumps up wildly with a loud screech of pain.*]

NURSE.

What is it?

[*BUTTERNIP jumps wildly around the stage in direct contrast to his former languid manner.*]

BUTTERNIP.

Ouch! I'm killed. I'm stabbed. Somebody stabbed me. [*Rubs hip.*]

MRS. WHIPPLE.

[*Rising in alarm.*] Stabbed you? [*Weeps loudly.*] Oh, my nerves, my nerves!

MRS. McCANN.

[*Comes down L. to seat.*] Oh!

BUTTERNIP.

That chair. I sat down on a hornet, bumblebee's nest, or something.

NURSE.

[*Feeling in the chair.*] It's a needle. Your sewing, Mrs. McCann. [*Hands it to her.*]

MRS. McCANN.

I didn't know he was going to sit in my chair.

BUTTERNIP.

Like to ruined me for life. I can't stand it to be jolted, much less stabbed like that. You did it on purpose.

MRS. McCANN.

Oh, I'm so sorry.

NURSE.

Never mind. It's probably done you a lot of good.

BUTTERNIP.

Good? Good! It nearly killed me. Leaving a needle sticking straight up in a chair. I'd get better treatment at home. This Sanitarium is killing me, killing me by inches.

[Feels seat of chair, sits down carefully, sinks back in seat with a sigh of relief.]

NURSE.

[Back of the table, takes bottle from pocket and prepares tonic.] It's time to take your tonic. See, I have it all ready for you.

BUTTERNIP.

I don't want to take any tonic.

NURSE.

You've got to take it.

[MRS. WHIPPLE resumes her seat at R. of table.]

BUTTERNIP.

It doesn't do a bit of good. I told the doctor I needed a new tonic.

NURSE.

This is a new tonic.

BUTTERNIP.

Well, I ain't a-goin' to take it out here in front of everybody.

NURSE.

Yes, you are. It's the doctor's orders. See, it's not the same color as the other. Try it now.

[*He tastes it cautiously.*]

BUTTERNIP.

Oh, I'm a dead man. [*Makes a horrible face.*] Say, where in tunket do they get all this vile poison they call tonics? It's worse than the other one. Say! [*Motions NURSE to come nearer; he speaks confidentially.*] What percent is it?

NURSE.

Percent?

BUTTERNIP.

You know what I mean. What percent is it?

NURSE.

Alcohol, fifty-nine percent.

BUTTERNIP.

The other one was only thirty-six. [*Drinks it greedily, smacks his lips.*] It ain't so bad. Gimme another.

NURSE.

Not for two hours.

BUTTERNIP.

Two hours! I'll be dead by that time if I can't have any tonic. That's all that's keeping me alive. I need a tonic every fifteen minutes. I know what I need.

NURSE.

And I know the doctor's orders.

BUTTERNIP.

Well, give me half a dose, anyhow.

NURSE.

Not another drop.

BUTTERNIP.

[*Whines.*] Aw, now ——

NURSE.

If you don't be calm and keep still you won't get another drop to-day.

BUTTERNIP.

Ain't I keeping still? And ca'm, I'm as ca'm as a baby.

NURSE.

[*Crossing back of Mrs. WHIPPLE.*] Are you comfortable, Mrs. Whipple?

MRS. WHIPPLE.

[*Starts to weep.*] Comfortable? I'll never be comfortable again. They've put that red-headed nurse on my case, and it's left me all unstrung. I—I j-just can't stand it. [Weeps.]

BUTTERNIP.

Give her a dose of my tonic.

NURSE.

Now don't think about your nurse. Try and be as cheerful as you can.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Cheerful, with my nerves! And that Miss Mitford has just been out here and drank up my lemonade. [*Tearfully.*] And the doctor allows me only one a day.

NURSE.

Is Miss Mitford out again?

MRS. WHIPPLE.

She went in the Infirmary. She's been hunting for clues again. Really, she left me so unstrung.

NURSE.

She's getting better, I think.

BUTTERNIP.

They give her a tonic every twenty minutes. I think I'll begin to hunt clues myself.

BUDDY.

[*Off stage at R. 2. Ascends the scale loudly.*]
Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah!

MRS. McCANN.

[*Sewing at L.*] My gracious, what's that?

MRS. WHIPPLE

An operation. Someone is shrieking in pain.

NURSE.

The Superintendent is giving one of the new patients an examination.

MRS. McCANN.

Maudelia told me that three men came last night.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Young men? [BUTTERNIP *doses.*

NURSE.

Two of them are. One is Miss Deane's fiancé. He's come to take her home to-morrow.

[BUDDY *heard off stage ascending the scale as before.*

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Oh, make him stop. My nerves! I can't stand it. I can't stand it at all.

NURSE.

It won't last very long. He must have facial paralysis, or something like that.

BUTTERNIP.

Paralysis, your grandmother! No one that can yell like that is paralyzed.

MRS. McCANN.

I had to do just the same thing when I had my first examination. That was just before my first operation. After my sixth my vocal chords were just as normal as anyone's. I can sing those exercises louder than he can. [*Starts to do so.*] Ah, ha!

BUTTERNIP.

[*Interrupts.*] We'll take your word for it.

NURSE.

Are you ready to go in now, Mr. Butternip?

BUTTERNIP.

No, I ain't. I'm ready for my tonic now.

NURSE.

[*Looks at her watch.*] In one hour and forty minutes.

BUTTERNIP.

In one hour and forty minutes I'll be beyond human aid.

NURSE.

You're all right, and you know it. I'll leave you here for ten minutes.

[*Exit in house, at R. BUDDY repeats scale louder.*]

MRS. McCANN.

[*Rising.*] My, he's growing worse.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

I wonder what he looks like.

[*Crosses to house and looks in.*]

MRS. McCANN.

Can you see him? [MRS. WHIPPLE *nods.*] Is he the young one?

MRS. WHIPPLE.

He's very good-looking.

MRS. McCANN.

I suppose he's the one who is going to marry Miss Deane.

BUTTERNIP.

No wonder they sent him to a Sanitarium.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

He's coming out here. [Resumes her seat.]

MRS. McCANN.

I'm so glad we're getting a few young men about the place.

BUTTERNIP.

They get tired of home-brew and come up here to get a decent tonic.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

He's a very aristocratic young man, so refined looking.

BUDDY.

[Off stage at R. 2, loudly.] Ah, that's all right, I can find me own way all right, all right. Don't worry about me, I won't get lost in the tall grass. I'm Jake, all right.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

What a distinguished voice.

BUDDY.

[Backs in from the house, speaking to someone off R. 2.] Sure, I'll find the doctor. Much obliged to you fer what you done fer me. [Backs into Mrs. Whipple, who is seated R. of table. She screams.] Oh, excuse me, lady, I was giving a correct imitation of a crab walkin' backward.

SUNSHINE

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Oh, it's perfectly all right. [*Slight pause.*] You're one of the new arrivals, aren't you?

BUDDY.

Right-o. You batted a home run the first time.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

I what?

BUDDY.

You guessed right. [*Back of table.*]

MRS. McCANN.

[*Seated L.*] Are you to be in the Infirmary?

BUDDY.

[*At rear c.*] Naw. Do I look like I was infirm?

BUTTERNIP.

[*Seated L. of table.*] Then you're to be in one of the cottages, I gather.

BUDDY.

Correct again. [*Sits in the wheel chair at rear c.*]

BUTTERNIP.

[*Barks at him.*] Here, here, be careful of that chair.

BUDDY.

[*Runs the chair rapidly toward BUTTERNIP, barking like a dog.*] Woof, woof, woof!

BUTTERNIP.

[*Throws up L. arm to guard his face.*] Don't you hit me.

BUDDY.

[Laughs and wheels chair back to rear c.] Aw, that's all right. I was just tryin' to get acquainted, that's all.

MRS. McCANN.

[Oratorically.] We're glad to welcome you here to the Sunshine Sanitarium, young man. I'm Mrs. McCann. Mrs. Bunch McCann of Detroit. This is my tenth season in the Infirmary.

BUDDY.

You orter be cured by this time.

MRS. McCANN.

No, young man, I'll never be cured. Temporary alleviation I may expect, but an ultimate recovery, never.

BUDDY.

Is that what you got? Take it from me, lady, if it's as bad as it sounds, it ain't no wonder this is your tenth season in the Infirmary.

MRS. McCANN.

This is Mr. Butternip. He's from Peoria.

BUDDY.

No wonder he looks like that.

BUTTERNIP.

I hope I see you well, young man.

BUDDY.

You orter. Yer lookin' right at me.

MRS. McCANN.

And Mrs. Whipple.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Mrs. Sol Whipple of Whipple's Corners, Connecticut. Lots of great people have come from Whipple's Corners.

BUDDY.

Well, you couldn't hardly blame 'em, could you?

BUTTERNIP.

You were just having an examination, wasn't you?

BUDDY.

I'll tell the world. Say, you orter heard me sing.

BUTTERNIP.

We did, thank you.

BUDDY.

Oh, don't mention it. I'll do it again if you liked it.

BUTTERNIP.

Wait till I've had my tonic. Then I don't care what happens.

BUDDY.

The doc said I had a sub-mucous infection, but it didn't seem to infect me voice any.

BUTTERNIP.

It sounded infected.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

You'd better be thankful you haven't got nerves. I'm a total wreck from nerves. The only nourishment I have is lemonade.

BUTTERNIP.

You'd better make 'em give you a tonic like mine. You take four of 'em and you won't have a nerve in your body. [*Enter NURSE GREGORY from R. 2.*]

NURSE.

[*At R.*] The doctor is ready for you, Mrs. McCann.

MRS. MCCANN.

[*Rises.*] I was hoping my little Maudelia would come back before I went in.

NURSE.

I'll look after her until you come out.

MRS. MCCANN.

[*Crosses to R.*] Thank you, nurse.

NURSE.

Have you rested long enough for the operation?

MRS. MCCANN.

Oh, yes. I'm quite ready. This will be my ninth.

BUDDY.

[*Rises.*] Your ninth?

MRS. MCCANN.

Yes. I'm the only woman in the Sanitarium who's had nine operations.

[*Exit into house at R. 2 with NURSE.*]

BUDDY.

Gee, after you've had eight er nine, I don't see what you got left to have taken out.

[*Resumes his seat in the wheel chair.*]

MRS. WHIPPLE.

[*Tearfully.*] She's always casting slurs at me because I don't have to be cut up. I guess my nerves are just as important as her bones. [*Weeps loudly.*] I won't put up with it. It's getting unbearable. Nobody knows or cares what I suffer. [*Weeps loudly.*]

BUDDY.

[*Wheels himself over to BUTTERNIP.*] Say, what's de matter with that old lady, anyhow? Is she ——? [*Taps his forehead.*]

BUTTERNIP.

No, no, of course not. She's jist nervous and sintimintal, that's all. She's full of sintimint.

BUDDY.

[*Shocked.*] Full of cinnamon? Good-night!

BUTTERNIP.

Not cinnamon, young man; sentiment!

BUDDY.

[*Wheels himself to MRS. WHIPPLE, laughing.*] Gosh, I thought he said you was full of cinnamon.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

[*Paying no attention to him, weeping softly.*] Mrs. McCann's gone. She was a good woman and now she's gone. It's the way of the world. Here to-day and gone to-morrow. Now—she's gone. [*Weeps loudly.*]

BUDDY.

[*Wheels himself away from her to rear c., in alarm.*] Say, them doctors is forgetting their treatment in her case. She's got it bad. That old lady

ain't right a-tall. [*Wheels himself down to BUTTERNIP.*] Say, little one, maybe you can tell me where's the guy I'm looking fer.

BUTTERNIP.

Are you speaking to me, sir?

BUDDY.

I'll say so. What did you think I was doin'? A song and dance?

BUTTERNIP.

I didn't quite catch you.

BUDDY.

The Sup'intendent what examined me gimme a note to me own private bone-setter.

BUTTERNIP.

Private bone-setter?

BUDDY.

Sure. Where kin I find him at?

BUTTERNIP.

Find who?

BUDDY.

The pinch-hitter—the medicine man—the guy who's goin' to make me jake again. Get me?

BUTTERNIP.

I don't understand a word you're talking about.

BUDDY.

[*Rises, crosses to MRS. WHIPPLE.*] He don't get me, lady. Maybe you kin wise me to where I kin

find the hypo-sticker who's going to get busy on me map.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Your map? What map?

BUDDY.

[*To audience.*] Wouldn't that smear you? Say, can't nobody around here talk United States?

MRS. WHIPPLE.

We don't understand you, young man.

BUDDY.

W'atcher want me ter do? Talk deef and dumb on me fingers?

BUTTERNIP.

You're looking for some one, I gather.

BUDDY.

You got a great head. You orter be in a college, er somewheres. Sure, I'm looking fer the doctor.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

[*To BUTTERNIP.*] Oh, he's looking for the doctor.

BUTTERNIP.

[*To BUDDY.*] Which doctor? There are six of 'em here.

BUDDY.

The Sup'intendent tells me to find a bird named Downs.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

There ain't a bird in the whole Sanitarium, except my poll parrot and the chickens.

BUDDY.

Maybe he's one of *them*.

BUTTERNIP.

You are looking for Doctor Downs?

BUDDY.

You got a great head fer facts. [Down L.
[Enter NURSE GREGORY from the house at R. 2.

NURSE.

Time to go in, Mr. Butternip.

BUTTERNIP.

Time for that tonic yet?

NURSE.

Oh, you're just like a child. You'll have to wait seventy minutes.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

How's Mrs. McCann getting along?

NURSE.

Just fine. They're almost through. It wasn't anything very serious.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

She said it was a matter of life and death.

NURSE.

Oh, she always says that.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

She got me all unstrung. You know my nerves can't stand anything like that. [Tearfully.] I thought I'd never see her again.

NURSE.

[*Crosses to BUTTERNIP.*] Can you get up?

BUTTERNIP.

Not unless I've had my tonic.

NURSE.

[*Tries to lift him.*] Here, let me help you.

BUTTERNIP.

Steady, now. Steady, young woman; don't jolt me. I can't bear to be jolted.

BUDDY.

I'll help you.

[*Bounces BUTTERNIP from chair and into wheel chair in a hurry.*]

BUTTERNIP.

[*Howls.*] Ohh! What you trying to do? Murder me? You nearly jolted the life out of me.

[*NURSE wheels him to REAR L.*]

BUDDY.

That wasn't a jolt; it was just a southpaw jab.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

This young man is waiting for Doctor Downs.

[*NURSE comes to c.*]

NURSE.

He's busy on a case just now. I'll send Sunshine to you. She's to be your nurse.

[*NURSE goes to the wheel chair at REAR L.*]

BUDDY.

Sunshine, eh? Say, lady, if it's all the same to you, I'd rather have moonshine.

BUTTERNIP.

[*With a cackling laugh.*] He, he, he. Says he'd rather have moonshine. Ain't he the funniest feller? Better give him a dose of my tonic. He, he, he. [*He is wheeled out at REAR L.*]

MRS. WHIPPLE.

[*Crossing to REAR L.*] Wait till you see Sunshine. She's the finest nurse in the Sanitarium. She was on my case until last Thursday. They took her away from me and gave me that little red-headed snip. [*Starts to weep.*] And my nerves can't abide a red-headed nurse.

BUDDY.

[*Follows her.*] Turn off the faucet, er you'll flood the sink.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Oh, I just can't stand it. [*Weeps loudly.*] I just can't stand it. [*Exits at REAR L., weeping loudly.*]

BUDDY.

[*Follows her to the exit, weeping loudly, then comes to c. laughing.*] Dat old lady is the best imitation of a sprinkling cart I ever saw in me life. [*Sits L. of table.*] Oh, I'm going to like this place a lot, I don't think. It's so nice and cheerful. I feel about as happy as a three-legged alley-cat on the back fence in a thunder-storm.

[*Soft music: Chorus of "Mother Machree."*]

MARY enters slowly from REAR L. She comes down to c. Take plenty of time for the entrance.

MARY.

Good-morning, sir.

BUDDY.

[*Looks up; his look of woe changes to a smile; he smiles broadly and rises.*] Morning.

MARY.

Miss Gregory said you were looking for Doctor Downs.

BUDDY.

She said she'd send Sunshine to me, and believe me, little one, that's just what she's done.

MARY.

That's a sort of a nickname they have for me. You told her you'd rather have moonshine. That's what they always say.

BUDDY.

[*Bashfully twists L. foot and looks at it.*] I'm kinda—I'm kinda partial to sunshine myself.

[*End music.*]

MARY.

[*Laughs.*] I believe I'm to be your nurse.

BUDDY.

Suits me from the ground up. I kin stand it, if you kin.

MARY.

Have you ever had a nurse before?

BUDDY.

Nope. I've had a stenographer and a ribbon sales-lady and a high-school junior, but you're me first nurse.

MARY.

You seem to have been quite popular with the ladies.

BUDDY.

Not me. I'm too bashful. I call 'em up and take 'em to a dance or some place, and then take 'em home again. The next time I call up they've allus got another date. Sump'm's wrong wit' me batting average when it comes to the ladies.

MARY.

Did the Superintendent give you an examination?

BUDDY.

Sure. He had me singing scales like a homesick canary.

MARY.

And what was his verdict?

BUDDY.

He said I had a good constitution, but a rotten voice.

MARY.

If you're under Doctor Downs it must be an operation.

BUDDY.

Sub-mucous infection.

MARY.

Oh, I'm glad it isn't anything serious.

BUDDY.

That sounds serious.

MARY.

Just a little whiff of ether and it will be all over in a minute.

BUDDY.

All over with me?

MARY.

No, with the infection. Did the examination hurt?

BUDDY.

Well, it wasn't no home-run hit or nothing like that. He stuck sump'm up in me head and I told him to cut it out. He said that was just what they intended to do.

MARY.

The doctor won't be ready for you until this afternoon. All you have to do until then is to rest.

BUDDY.

Say, I'm worse'n you think I am. I'll have to have me nurse with me until I have the operation.

MARY.

[Laughs.] I've heard that one before, Mr. — Say, what's your name?

BUDDY.

Brady. Buddy Brady.

MARY.

Not the great Buddy Brady?

BUDDY.

Naw, I dunno as you could just say that.

MARY.

Not the southpaw? [*He grins and nods.*] You are? Say, I want to shake hands with you, Mr. Brady. I've seen you work and I think you're a wonderful ball player.

BUDDY.

[*Smiles at her, then turns away bashfully and speaks to the audience.*] Say, this here Sanitarium ain't goin' to be so bad, after all, I'll tell the bleachers.

MARY.

I saw you pitch in Brooklyn. Two years ago. On the Fourth of July.

BUDDY.

The Fourth of July? Say, don't I remember that game? There was a man on second and nobody out when I came in. I gave him three fast balls.

MARY.

[*Close to him.*] And he let two of 'em go by.

BUDDY.

And then missed the other one. [*Laughs.*]

MARY.

Then you came right across the heart with a fast one. It had an awful hop in it. It seemed to bounce up and down as it flew.

BUDDY.

Tig hit it and Mike was camped under it.

[*Fast dialogue and action.*]

MARY.

Dutch Weinkoop was the boy I was afraid of.

BUDDY.

Dutch? I gave him one spitter like that, [*Imitates.*] and then another he didn't strike at, like that. [*Imitates.*] That was a ball. Then I comes back with me two fast ones and Dutch was a dead baby.

MARY.

They didn't steal any bases, either. Gee, I could have kissed you that day.

BUDDY.

Why didn't you?

MARY.

I won four dollars and a pair of silk ———
[*Pauses.*]

BUDDY.

Silk?

MARY.

[*Laughs.*] Gloves.

BUDDY.

[*Sadly.*] Dat was one of me big games. In them days I thought I was Jake fer the rest of me life, and then—one day—McPherson was twirlin' the ball and I—got it. Right here. [*Hands to heart.*] And another here. [*Hand between eyes.*] And—it—was—all—over. It was Buddy Brady fer the discard. [*Turns back to audience and speaks with deep emotion.*] It was all over. I was a has-been, and I could never pitch another ball again.

MARY.

That's why you came here to the Sanitarium?

BUDDY.

[*Turns to her.*] Yeah. Me pal Jim Anthony was comin' up to meet his fi-nan-say, who's been cooped in here, and he said I'd better come along and let the Sup'intendent look me over.

MARY.

Mr. Anthony is engaged to Miss Sylvia Deane, isn't he?

BUDDY.

Yeah, that's her name. Miss Deane.

MARY.

I suppose he is a rich young man.

BUDDY.

Sure he is. He's got a couple of farms up state that brought him in thirty thousand clear money last year.

MARY.

Thirty thousand? My! I wish I had a couple of farms.

BUDDY.

I'm going to manage one of 'em for him next year. You see, he's going to move to the city and go into business.

MARY.

[*Slowly and bashfully.*] Won't it be awfully lonesome for you up there managing a farm all by yourself?

BUDDY.

Lonesome? Aw, I dunno. I got a dog.

MARY.

[Shows impatience at his reply.] I've got to go into the operating room now to see if Doctor Downs needs me. You wait around here in the grounds. Or come back at one o'clock.

BUDDY.

T'anks. I'll stick around here, if it's all the same to you. Maybe you can run out once in a while.

MARY.

What for?

BUDDY.

Oh, nothing. I just kinda like Sunshine, dat's all.
[Giggles.]

MARY.

[Giggles.] All right. I'll ruh out once in a while if I can. [Gives her hand.] Good-bye.

BUDDY.

[Holding her hand.] Say, how do you like being a nurse here in the Sanitarium?

MARY.

I like it. But there are other things I'd like better. Mother always used to say that I was a reg'lar farmer.

BUDDY.

[Still holding her hand.] It ain't no wonder the folks here call you Sunshine. You've done me a lot of good already.

MARY.

Do you know I've learned something about you?

BUDDY.

What is it?

MARY.

[*Laughs and runs to door of house at R. 2, turns, faces him.*] You're not nearly as bashful as you think you are. [*Laughs and exits into the house.*]

BUDDY.

Sunshine! Say, they got her right label all right, all right. Gee, she's a nice girl. The first time in my life I ever met a girl I could talk to without gettin' skeered. [*Sits in the swing down L.*] I wouldn't have missed this trip here to the Sanitarium for a million dollars. Sunshine! I'll say she is, I'll tell the grand stand.

[*Enter MAJOR KELLICOTT from REAR L.*]

MAJOR.

Ah, good-morning, Mr. Brady. [*Comes down c.*]

BUDDY.

[*At L.*] Good-morning is right. I never saw a better one. Sunshine and everything.

MAJOR.

Have you seen anything of Mr. Anthony?

BUDDY.

Not since breakfast. He had a date with his lady fi-nan-say to ride through the mountains, er sump'm.

MAJOR.

[*Looks at watch.*] He said he'd meet me here at ten.

BUDDY.

I didn't know you was coming here to the Sanitarium at all. When we met you on the train last night I thought you was going on through.

MAJOR.

To be quite frank with you, that was my intention. But I thought this would be a good time and place to interest Mr. Anthony in a little business proposition I'm connected with.

BUDDY.

Jim don't know nothing about business. Why, he ain't city-broke yet.

MAJOR.

I intend to introduce him to the business side of the city. He'll be city-broke then.

BUDDY.

[*To the audience.*] That ain't all. He'll be dead broke.

MAJOR.

You and Mr. Anthony are great friends, aren't you?

BUDDY.

I'll tell the team, we are. Buddies over in France, Jim and me was, and we've stuck closter than glue ever since.

MAJOR.

I understand he's not connected with any city business?

BUDDY.

Naw; all he does is sign checks and go to the ball game.

MAJOR.

He told me he was going to place his farm under managers and live in the city.

BUDDY.

That's right. I'm going to run one of 'em for him.

MAJOR.

Oh, so you are a farmer?

BUDDY.

[*Angrily.*] Who's a farmer? Naw, I don't know nothin' about no farm, but Jim says all I got to do is to pay the men and milk the cows. I'm going to wear cowhide boots, by Gosh, and grow long chin friskers and everything.

MAJOR.

[*Looks off L.*] Someone is riding up the mountain. I think it's Mr. Anthony.

BUDDY.

[*Crosses to REAR L. and looks off.*] Yep, that's him. And his fi-nan-say is with him. I guess I'll slide along to third base. [*Crosses to REAR C.*]

MAJOR.

Have you met the young lady?

BUDDY.

Not yet. Say, she's a queen to look at, ain't she? [*Looking off REAR L.*] What's she dressed up that way for? Is that the uniform of the Sanitarium?

MAJOR.

[*Laughs.*] Why, that's a riding habit.

BUDDY.

I'll say it's a bad habit. She looks like a boy. Come on, let's beat it.

MAJOR.

Don't you want to meet the young lady?

BUDDY.

Sure. But not now. You see I ain't used to these society dames.

MAJOR.

I'll wait till he's at liberty. Let's look at the tennis court.

[*Exit, REAR R., back of the house. Enter MARY from R. 2, coming from the house.*]

MARY.

[*Agitated.*] Mr. Brady!

BUDDY.

[*At c.*] Gee, the sun is shining again.

MARY.

Who was that man?

BUDDY.

What man?

MARY.

The man you were just talking to. I saw you from the window.

BUDDY.

That's Major Kellicott from the city. Do you know him?

MARY.

No—I—that is, I don't think I do. What time is it?

BUDDY.

[*Looks at huge watch.*] Just ten.

MARY.

Then I have time to catch the train.

BUDDY.

Train? Are you going away?

MARY.

Yes, I'm going away; I've got to get away.

BUDDY.

Where you going?

MARY.

I don't know. Anywhere away from here. Anywhere. I've got to get away.

[*Hurries out at R., going into the house.*]

BUDDY.

Going away? I wonder what scared her. [*Pause.*] I wonder—what—scared her? It's him. She's afraid of Kellicott. She's running away from him. I can't let her go away. She'll stay and I'll take care of her. I'll take care of her.

[*Exits at REAR R., going back of the house.*]

Enter JIM ANTHONY and SYLVIA DEANE
from REAR L.

SYLVIA.

My, I'm glad you're here, Jim. I feel a hundred percent better already.

JIM.

And to-morrow we go to the city and start making plans for the future. Our future. We'll be married next week.

SYLVIA.

Oh, not next week. It'll take me months to get ready.

JIM.

And while you are getting ready I'll be building a little nest, just for us two, for you and me. A little love-nest.

[DUET may be introduced, similar to "A Little Love Nest" from the musical comedy "Mary."

SYLVIA.

Who were the men who came up with you last night?

JIM.

One was Buddy Brady. He was my pal over in France. They don't make 'em any finer than Buddy. He's going to run one of my farms for me when I move to the city.

SYLVIA.

But I thought he was a baseball player.

JIM.

He was, but he had an accident that put him out of the game forever.

SYLVIA.

Oh, I'm so sorry. He saved your life, didn't he, Jim?

JIM.

He sure did. Picked me off of a barb-wire entanglement right in the face of the enemy's fire. He got a D. S. M. for that.

SYLVIA.

I want to meet him right away.

JIM.

I'll bring him up after lunch. He's a diamond in the rough, Buddy is, but a diamond for all that.

SYLVIA.

I'm sure of it.

JIM.

I thought maybe the Sanitarium might help him.

SYLVIA.

Oh, he's here for treatment then?

JIM.

Yes, if they can keep him still long enough. His middle name is activity. The other man who came with us is Major Kellicott. We met him on the train and he wanted to put some business proposition up to me, so he decided to stay over here for a day and talk to me. He wants me to go into business in the city.

SYLVIA.

That's just what I want, too. It would be the best thing in the world for both of us. No matter how

much money a man has, he should always have a business of some kind.

JIM.

Little Miss Wisdom, that's just my idea exactly. But why talk business when we can talk of so many more interesting things?

SYLVIA.

We can't talk any more at all. I've got to go in now for my last treatment. Come along and meet my doctor. [At door R. 2.]

JIM.

I want to tell him how grateful I am for making you well again.

[They go into the house at R. 2. Enter BUDDY from REAR R., from behind the house.]

BUDDY.

I couldn't talk to him. I'm seeing red and I wouldn't say a word until I knew what it was all about. He scared her. She was like a little frightened bird trying to get away from a snake. I wonder what kind of a strangle hold he's got on her. Gee, she's a nice girl, and he, he ain't fit to live in the same world with her. [Crosses to the swing down L.] I mustn't let her get away. Sooner than have anything like that happen I'd take him out there and drop him down the side of the mountain. [Soft music, Chorus of "Mother Machree." MARY enters from the house, dressed in an old-fashioned traveling dress with coat and hat. She carries a large, cheap-looking grip. She starts out at REAR L. but pauses as BUDDY speaks.] Halt!

MARY.

[*At REAR L.*] Oh, I thought you'd gone.

BUDDY.

[*Down c.*] When the traffic cop says Halt, you want'er stop. See?

MARY.

But I've got to catch the eleven o'clock train.

BUDDY.

Ain't you going to say good-bye to me?

MARY.

[*Comes to him at c.*] Yes, sir. You've been good to me, Mr. Brady. I wish all the men in the world were as good as you are.

BUDDY.

First time in my life anybody ever said I was good. So you're going away?

MARY.

Yes, I've got to. [*Places grip on stage.*]

BUDDY.

Did you tell 'em in there?

MARY.

No, I didn't tell anybody. I didn't have time. I don't want anyone to see me.

BUDDY.

Whatcha goin' away for, Sunshine?

MARY.

I—I—can't tell you. It's just that I want to get away from here; I want to go where no one knows

me and where those who know me can't ever find me again. I want to make a new start somewhere—somewhere in the country. *[End music.]*

BUDDY.

Why don't you go home?

MARY.

I haven't any home. I lived alone with my mother until—until—she —— *[Weeps.]*

BUDDY.

Then you're all alone? You ain't got nobody?

MARY.

No one who cares anything about me.

BUDDY.

Yes, you have. I care.

MARY.

You? Why, you don't hardly know me. You just saw me for the first time half an hour ago.

BUDDY.

Yeah, that's so, little one, but you've got a friend in me. Now tell me honestly why you are hurrying away.

MARY.

I—can't tell you. I can't tell anyone.

BUDDY.

I don't think you ought to go. You promised to help me when I put meself in the doctor's hands this afternoon. You promised, didn't you?

MARY.

Y-e-s.

BUDDY.

Well, then, I want you to keep your promise. Somebody here has frightened you. You thought you was all alone and wanted to make a quick get-away, but you was wrong. You ain't alone. I'm here with you. I'll take care of you.

MARY.

And you really want me to stay?

BUDDY.

Want you to? Sure. Will y'? I give you my word that nothing, ner no one can harm you. And I know I couldn't have that sub-mucous infection taken out without you.

MARY.

Then I'll stay, if you really want me to. [*Gives him her hand.*] Say, Mr. Brady, [*Pauses and looks him square in the face.*] I just want you to know what I think.

BUDDY.

What do you think?

MARY.

I think they don't make men any finer than you are. I'm not afraid of anything in the world when you are here.

BUDDY.

Then, believe me, Sunshine, I'll be here fer some time.

MARY.

You've been awfully good to me, Mr. Brady. [*Soft music, Chorus of "Mother Machree."*] You won't let anyone harm me, will you?

BUDDY.

No, I'll tell the fans I won't.

MARY.

[*Crosses to house at R.*] Then I'll stay. [*Turns to him.*] You know everything seems different when you've got a friend.

BUDDY.

[*Hastily crosses to her.*] Then you'll let me be your friend?

MARY.

I'm proud to have you. Now I'm not afraid of anything. [*Exits R.*]

BUDDY.

[*Looks after her, pauses, then crosses down to c., turns and looks after her again.*] Her friend, am I? [*Pauses, straightens up defiantly.*] Now, Major Kellicott, I'm ready fer you. If you do her dirt, I'll break you, break you wit' me two hands like a rotten stick. I'll break you and throw you at her feet!
[*Music swells as the CURTAIN falls slowly.*]

[*Second Picture:—BUDDY has crossed to the door of the house and stands looking off stage into house.*]

[*Third Picture:—All the characters that have appeared in the first act are discovered bowing to the audience.*]

[*Fourth Picture:—Curtain calls taken by BUDDY and MARY.*]

ACT II

SCENE.—*The same as in ACT I. The table down R. C. is covered with a cloth long enough to conceal anyone hiding under the table. Lights the same as in ACT I. JIM ANTHONY is discovered at c. and a male quartet is grouped around the stage. Before the curtain rises the quartet sings some popular chorus, the curtain rising on the last line.*

As the curtain rises JIM may introduce a popular song with the other men singing the chorus with him. One verse and two choruses are enough. At the end of this number MAUDELIA enters from REAR L. carrying a small fish on a string.

MAUDELIA.

[*Coming down c.*] Say, do any of you men want to buy a fish? [Shows it to them.]

JIM.

I don't think we want to buy any fish to-day.

MAUDELIA.

It's an awful nice fish. Look at him wiggle, and ain't he big?

JIM.

[*At R. C.*] He's a regular whale. Where did you get him?

MAUDELIA.

In the water. Where did you think I got him, in an apple tree?

JIM.

And did you catch him?

MAUDELIA.

I'll tell the world I caught him. I'll catch something else, too, when mom finds me.

JIM.

Why?

MAUDELIA.

'Cause I ran away from the nurse and went a-fishin'. Tore my dress, too, and I got a hole in my stocking. Say, is lunch over yet?

JIM.

Sure. You're about half an hour late.

MAUDELIA.

And I'm hungrier than a mud turtle, too. I'm holler clean from here [*Touches head.*] down to here. [*Touches feet.*] I guess I'll have to eat the fish.

JIM.

Maybe if you go into the kitchen the cook will give you a hand-out.

MAUDELIA.

She'll gimme a hand-out all right, but it'll be a push. The cook is sore at me ever since I put the two kittens in her bread dough. She says I'm a little terror, and I guess she's right.

JIM.

Why, I think you're a real nice little girl.

MAUDELIA.

Say, where do you get that stuff? You're a new one here, ain't you?

JIM.

Just came last night.

MAUDELIA.

What you got? High blood pressure, sciatic rheumatism or neurasthenia? My mom's had all of 'em. I'll bet she's had more things than anyone else in the Sanitarium. What are you here for?

JIM.

[Laughs.] I'm here just for instance.

MAUDELIA.

What's instance, some new kind of an operation? Don't tell mom, or she'll think she's got it.

JIM.

If you want any lunch you'd better hurry along.

MAUDELIA.

I bet I know who you are. You're the goof who came up here to marry Miss Deane, ain't you?

[MEN laugh.]

JIM.

Well, I guess I am.

MAUDELIA.

Did you give her a ring?

JIM.

Sure.

MAUDELIA.

How much did it cost?

JIM.

Oh, a heap of money.

MAUDELIA.

Is it that big diamond one she wears all the time?

JIM.

Yes, I think so.

MAUDELIA.

Mom told old Mis' Whipple that she bet it cost every cent of a thousand. Did it?

JIM.

Something like that.

MAUDELIA.

Do you ever make love to Miss Deane in front of other people?

JIM.

Not if I can help it. Why?

MAUDELIA.

Say, I'll give you this here fish for nothing, if you'll let me see you and her make love.

JIM.

Why do you want to see us?

MAUDELIA.

I want to get some practice, that's why.

JIM.

I'm sorry, but I don't think I can oblige you.

MAUDELIA.

Not even for the fish?

JIM.

Not even for the fish.

MAUDELIA.

That's just the way, folks never do anything to oblige me, and how do you suppose I'll know how to act when I get proposed to, if I never have any practice? [*Places the fish on the table.*] Say, who was singing when I came up the hill?

JIM.

We all were.

MAUDELIA.

I can sing, too.

JIM.

You can?

MAUDELIA.

I'll tell the world. Want to hear me try?

JIM.

Sure. Go ahead, if you're not too bashful.

MAUDELIA.

There ain't a bashful bone in my body. Listen.

[*Song introduced. At the end of the song the men go out at R. MAUDELIA catches the last man and brings him down C.*]

MAN.

What's the big idea?

MAUDELIA.

Say, do you think he's coming back here and make love to Miss Deane?

MAN.

It's very likely.

MAUDELIA.

You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to get under there [*Points to table.*] and hear how they do it. [*MAN laughs and exits at R.*] It's a good place to hide from mom, too. [*Crawls under the table.*] I'm just like an Indian in my little tent.

[*NURSE GREGORY wheels in BUTTERNIP from R. 2.*

BUTTERNIP.

Don't jar me. Go easy, I tell you. The least little jar makes me see stars and causes my ears to ring.

NURSE.

I'm not jarring you. If you don't be good you shan't have your tonic.

BUTTERNIP.

Who says I shan't? [*She wheels him to table and stands back of table.*] How do you ever expect me to get well without my tonic? Seems like it's been a year since I had the last one.

[*She pours tonic in small glass.*

NURSE.

Now, don't be impatient. A little of that goes a long way.

BUTTERNIP.

[*Drinks it.*] I'll say it does. I can feel it tingling clear down to my toes.

NURSE.

[*Crosses to REAR L.*] I wonder what's become of Maudelia. Her mother is getting so worried. I think I'll walk down to the beach, if you don't mind. I'll be back in five minutes. That child is always getting lost. [*Exits at REAR L.*]

BUTTERNIP.

Never saw such a Sanitarium in all my life. Only let me have a tonic once every two hours. [*Looks around.*] She's gone. Guess I'll take another tonic. [*Pours small glassful of tonic and drinks it, smacking his lips.*] Fifty-nine percent, eh? Who, it's got a kick like a bee-stung mule.

[*Enter TESSIE from R. 2.*]

TESSIE.

[*Comes quickly to BUTTERNIP.*] Shh! She says they're after you. Now is the time to escape. The police are in the house.

BUTTERNIP.

Wow! I thought you were the nurse.

TESSIE.

I have sent a letter for aid. Do you know how I sent word to them?

BUTTERNIP.

I can't even guess.

TESSIE.

I sent it by a carrier pigeon. I couldn't get a

pigeon so I sent it by Mrs. Whipple's poll-parrot Amelia. Ha, ha. I've outwitted them. Amelia flew away and soon relief will be at hand. She says you'd better leave at once. The police are after you. Don't tell anyone I told you. Shhh! [*Crosses to R. 2.*] Shh! Amelia flew out of the window and I'm going to get in her cage and take her place to ward off suspicion. Shhh! Not a word. [*Exit, R.*]

BUTTERNIP.

If the doctors hear her raving like that they'll put her in close confinement. Guess I'll have another tonic. That woman's got me so excited. [*Drinks.*] My, that's an awful taste. Worst taste I ever tasted. Guess I'll have another to take the taste outa my mouth. [*Pours tonic in glass and drinks.*] Mosht peculiar tonic. [*Makes a horrible grimace.*] Yesh, you are, old tonic; you're the mosht peculiar tonic I ever tonicked since I've been tonicking. Makes my mouth feel as dry as a chip. Guess I'll have anuzzer. [*Starts to take bottle. MAUDELIA pulls table-cloth a little, causing the bottle to slide away from him.*] Hold still, old bottle. Wash ma'r with zhat bottle? I know whash ma'r wish it. It'sh full o' tonic. And I'm full o' tonic, too, and when anyshing is full o' tonic dash as strong as that tonic, it's bound to wobble. [*Sees fish.*] There's a fish, too. I got 'em. I shee fishes and tonics and everything. [*MAUDELIA raises her shoulders, causing the table to move up and down.*] Help! Help! Ghoshts!

[*Jumps up and rushes wildly out at R., yelling.*]

MAUDELIA.

[*Crawls out.*] Wasn't that funny? [*Laughs.*] I guess he won't drink so much tonic next time. I

ain't going to wait for that man to make love no longer. I'm too hungry. It's me for the kitchen.

[*Exit at R., with the fish.* NURSE GREGORY enters from REAR L.

NURSE.

Mr. Butternip! Goodness, where is he? [*Comes to table.*] He couldn't walk by himself. What's become of him? [*Sees bottle.*] Oh, ho! That's it, is it? [*Takes bottle and glass.*] I'll have to tell the doctor at once.

[*Enter MAJOR KEL LICOTT from REAR L.*

MAJOR.

Ah, nurse!

NURSE.

Yes, sir?

MAJOR.

Will you ask Mr. Anthony to step out here a moment?

NURSE.

Excuse me, sir. I'm a nurse, not a messenger boy. [*Crosses to door R.*] It's only fifty feet from here to Mr. Anthony's room. [*Exit at R., into house.*

MAJOR.

Impudent! I must manage to get back to the city to-morrow. This place is too dead for me. But first there's the little chicken to be plucked, and maybe I can pick up a little other business on the side. [*At L.*

[*Enter JIM and SYLVIA from house at R. 2.*

JIM.

Ah, Major, I was looking for you. Dear, let me present Major Kellicott of New York.

MAJOR.

[*Shaking hands with SYLVIA.*] This is a pleasure.

SYLVIA.

Jim has been telling me about you, Major. I'm glad he's decided to go into business. I want him to be a regular business man.

JIM.

[*At R.*] I'm afraid I'll be an awful dub in New York. All I know is farming.

MAJOR.

[*At L. C.*] You've made a wonderful success with your farms, I hear.

SYLVIA.

[*At R. C.*] Yes, that's true. But we've decided to live in the city, haven't we, Jim?

JIM.

Just as you say.

MAJOR.

You are perfectly right. We city men are always glad to see new young men enter our fields. I know all about your success in farming, Mr. Anthony, and I promise you I'll do all I can for you in the city. My partner, Mr. Magee, was speaking of you only last week, after he met you at the club.

SYLVIA.

Mr. Silas N. Magee?

MAJOR.

Of course, there's only one Mr. Magee in New York.

SYLVIA.

I've seen his pictures in the magazines. And you are his partner?

JIM.

It's one of the biggest firms in New York, honey.

MAJOR.

Listen. I know a certain reliable business firm that wishes to increase its capital. It desires to enlarge its interests. Now you have the capital and if you come in with this firm it would buy up Santa Fé, which is flooding the market at 61, and I know from inside information that in one week's time it will reach 101.

SYLVIA.

Wonderful.

JIM.

A return of profits amounting to forty cents on the dollar.

MAJOR.

Would you like to take Santa Fé?

JIM.

I—er—I don't know. Would we have to go there to live?

MAJOR.

Santa Fé, you understand, is a railroad stock. Bonds, you know.

JIM.

[*To SYLVIA.*] Oh, it's bonds, Sylvia.

SYLVIA.

I've always heard that bonds were good investments.

MAJOR.

If you care to come in with us we'll double your investment in a year.

JIM.

You mean that there is an opening for me with the Magee, Kellicott Company?

MAJOR.

If you will put into the firm an amount equal to our investments, you can become an equal partner.

JIM.

A partner with Magee and Kellicott?

SYLVIA.

[*Takes JIM's arm.*] Oh, Jim, that's wonderful.

JIM.

I'll say it is.

MAJOR.

We'd change the firm name to Magee and Partners.

JIM.

And I'd be one of the partners?

MAJOR.

Exactly. How does the idea strike you?

JIM.

Like a derrick. How much would I have to squander?

MAJOR.

Squander?

JIM.

No, no; I mean invest? I'll put in every cent I'm worth.

MAJOR.

Forty thousand dollars will let you in on the ground floor.

JIM.

I'll go to New York with you to-morrow.

MAJOR.

I'll just draw up the necessary papers here in the office of the Sanitarium. We can arrange it all right here. I'll have them ready for you in fifteen or twenty minutes.

JIM.

[*Shakes hands with him.*] I don't know how to thank you.

MAJOR.

That's all right, my boy. I'm always glad to welcome young blood into the business. I flatter myself that I'm a good judge of men. I always have been. And I'm perfectly satisfied with our new partner.

JIM.

Gosh, I feel as if I'd ought to do something to celebrate.

SYLVIA.

There isn't anything to do up here, but to go down the mountain to the country store and squander five cents for an ice-cream cone.

MAJOR.

[*Takes papers from wallet.*] And in the meantime I'll draw up some sort of a contract.

SYLVIA.

[*Crosses to him.*] I want to thank you, Major Kellicott, for all you're going to do for us.

[*Shakes hands with him.*]

MAJOR.

Thank you, Miss Deane, it's a great pleasure. [*Looks at her hand.*] What a wonderful ring!

SYLVIA.

Yes, isn't it? It's the prettiest solitaire I've ever seen.

MAJOR.

Jim has wonderful taste, in rings as well as girls.

SYLVIA.

Oh, Major!

JIM.

[*At REAR L.*] We'd better hurry.

SYLVIA.

[*Rings hand-bell on table.*] I'll have to tell the nurse where I'm going.

[*Music: Chorus of "Mother Machree" played softly and slowly. MARY enters from house at R. 2 and stands in doorway, not seeing the MAJOR, who is seated at table, L. C.*]

MARY.

Yes?

SYLVIA.

Oh, Sunshine, just tell the matron that Jim and I are going down to the village.

MARY.

Yes, Miss Deane.

[SYLVIA takes JIM'S arm and they go out at REAR L. MARY starts out at R. MAJOR, who started at her voice, rises and speaks in a commanding tone.]

MAJOR.

Mary!

[Comes toward her.]

MARY.

[Shrinks from him in fear.] Don't—don't touch me. I must go.

MAJOR.

So this is where you have been hiding for three years? You might have known I'd find you some day. [Grasps her wrist.] What are you doing here?

MARY.

I'm—I'm here as a nurse.

[End music.]

MAJOR.

A nurse. [Drops her wrist and sneers.] A fine nurse! [Pause.] Well, what have you got to say?

MARY.

Nothing. I must go in. I am working in the operating room.

MAJOR.

You'll go in when I say you can. I want to have a few words with you, my girl.

MARY.

I'll not listen to you. I'll call for help —

MAJOR.

[*Grasps her wrist.*] You'll not call for help. Have you forgotten who you are and who I am?

MARY.

[*Crosses and sinks in chair at R. of table.*] No, God help me, no. I'd give the world to forget. Why have you come here? What do you want with me?

MAJOR.

I've come to take you away.

MARY.

Away!

MAJOR.

[*At L. of table.*] I want you to come back to New York with me. I have a little job for you.

MARY.

[*Toneless, despair.*] No—no—I can't do it. [*Suddenly and passionately.*] Oh, go away, leave me alone. I'm so happy here. Don't take me away. [*Sobs.*] Don't take me away.

MAJOR.

I suppose you'd rather stay here and drudge yourself out as a servant in a Sanitarium.

MARY.

Rather stay here? Yes, I'd rather stay here and scrub the floors as a drudge, as a slave, than go with you. I'd rather stay here, Hannigan Blake, and keep my self-respect, for here I am among friends, friends, do you hear, for the first time in my life.

MAJOR.

You go in there and get your things and be ready to leave with me to-night.

MARY.

No, I won't do it. I'm free from you and your way of life and I'll never go back—never. I'm going to do whatever I please without asking you or anyone. I am a woman, and the time has come for me to declare myself. Henceforth I'm going straight.

[She has risen on "I won't do it," and stands glaring at him across the table.]

MAJOR.

You forget, my lady, that I'm your father.

MARY.

Forget! *[Wildly.]* Forget? Do you think that I could ever forget that? It's with me the first thing in the morning and the last thing at night. For three years I've hidden away from you, but I've seen you in my dreams, holding me by the hair as you used to and beating me, beating me, beating me!

[She breaks down and covers her face with her hands and sobs.]

MAJOR.

It was all for your good. But I'll treat you better now. I've got a good thing, Mary, and I mean to push it. You've got to help me.

MARY.

No, I won't do it. I won't go away.

MAJOR.

You'll do as I say. You're mine, do you hear, as much mine now as you were in the old days at the mill. [*Leans toward her across the table.*]

MARY.

[*Straightens up at the word "mill."*] The mill! You do well to remind me of that. I'm no longer the weak little six-year-old that you tore from her ragged cot at four o'clock every morning and forced to slave like a grown woman in the mill until long after nightfall. I was your slave then, for fifteen years. But that's all past now, Hannigan Blake. I've done with you—done with you forever.

[*Faces him defiantly, their faces close together across the table.*]

MAJOR.

Is that the way to speak to your father?

MARY.

You're not my father. Thank God there's not one drop of your vile blood in my veins. You were my master, I was your slave, just as my mother had been your slave before me. Ever since I was six years old, and before, I've worked for you, slaved for you, even stole for you. Father! you who used to take my pitiful earnings from my baby hands! You who beat me when I cried because I was faint for food and want of sleep. [*Grimly.*] Well, you'll never beat me again, Hannigan Blake. You killed all the childhood in me, and the girlhood, but I'm my own mistress at last. When the other children at the mill

went to their decent dances and picnics you made me stay at home and beg for you. Every day for fifteen years for nine hours a day I worked for you blindly like a dumb creature on a machine, hating you, hating myself, hating life. Sometimes in the middle of the night I'd start up with a scream and long to die. For fifteen years I was your slave. Then—I got—away.

MAJOR.

And see what you've come to. Here I am rolling in riches and you, you're a trained nurse.

MARY.

Yes, and this life has been the happiest I have ever known. I'm with people who care for me, I'm living straight and honest, and I have my own self-respect. Why, I wouldn't go back with you, no, not for all the money on Broadway.

MAJOR.

Suppose I were to tell them who you were; suppose I were to tell them *what* you were.

MARY.

Do it! They'd have you arrested for your pains. I have told them everything. Go and leave me alone. I never want to see you again.

MAJOR.

I tell you I need you, my girl, and I'm going to get you. Understand? I'm going to get you!

MARY.

You are not! I am a woman now, not the weak, shrinking girl you once knew, but a woman with friends who care for me and who will protect me.

[*Enter NURSE GREGORY from R. 2.*

NURSE.

Sunshine, have you seen anything of little Maudelia? I can't find her anywhere.

MARY.

No, I haven't seen her. I'll look up-stairs in the Infirmary. [Crosses to R.]

MAJOR.

I'll see you again before I leave to-night.

MARY.

I don't think I'll ever see you again. [To NURSE.]
Find the new nurse and send her to the operating room. Tell her to have everything hot and to put out the new ether cones. It wants fresh carbolic and plenty of sponges. [Exits at R.]

MAJOR

Who is that high and mighty person, Nurse?

NURSE.

That's Miss Ray, the head nurse, sir.

MAJOR.

H'm! I thought she was someone I used to know, but I guess I was mistaken. [Crosses to R. 2.] Is there any place around here where I can find some writing material?

NURSE.

Yes, sir. In the Superintendent's office. One of the internes is there now.

MAJOR.

Very good. [Exit at R. 2, into house.]

NURSE.

I simply can't stand that man. I wonder who he is.

[Wheels the wheel-chair off at R. Enter BUDDY from REAR L. He comes down c.]

BUDDY.

[Looks around.] Nobody here. I'm all dressed up and there's no place to go. I wonder where Sunshine is. Gee, she's a nice girl. Jim's down there with Sylvia buying out the grocery store and all the girls is paired off with all the boys. All except me. I'm lonesome, I guess. *[Sits on the table.]* Nobody seems to care whether I come or go. I'm like the guy who was just a lonesome little dewdrop looking for a place to fall. *[Song may be introduced here similar to "I'm a Lonesome Little Dewdrop," from the "Greenwich Village Follies," or it may be omitted at the discretion of the actor.]* I wish it was time for me operation, then I'd see Sunshine again. Gee, she's a nice girl.

[Sits at L. Enter TESSIE from the house at R. 2.]

TESSIE.

[In doorway.] Shh!

BUDDY.

[Starts.] What's the matter?

TESSIE.

I've been looking for you. *[Comes to c.]*

BUDDY.

For me? What for? *[Rises.]*

TESSIE.

Shh! Have they found a clue yet?

BUDDY.

[*Puzzled.*] A clue? A clue to what?

TESSIE.

[*In a loud whisper.*] To the murder.

BUDDY.

[*Sinks in chair at L.*] What murder?

TESSIE.

I thought you were the detective on the lookout for a clue. Right there was where the body was found. [*Points at his chair.*]

BUDDY.

[*Nervously.*] Right where?

TESSIE.

Seated in that very chair. [*BUDDY jumps up.*] But they never found the knife. [*Goes to him.*] Tell me, do you wear suspenders?

BUDDY.

No. Why?

TESSIE.

One of the detectives thought he might have been strangled with your suspenders. But that isn't possible if you haven't any.

BUDDY.

I'll say it ain't. He wasn't strangled with *my* suspenders.

TESSIE.

Don't move; keep cool. In a terrible affair like this one should always keep cool. Put some cracked ice on your head and then they will never suspect you. There is only one way to escape, through the cellar. I've bored a hole through the floor of the Infirmary and I whispered my message to the parrot and let her escape through the window. Mrs. Whipple's poll-parrot Amelia has carried the message and soon assistance will arrive. We must find the clue.

BUDDY.

What clue? Who was murdered?

TESSIE.

I have my suspicions, but I can't tell you anything yet. I must go. It's time for me to shoot fire-crackers at the diet cook. Shh! Don't try to follow me, for you are watched. [*Crosses to door.*]

BUDDY.

[*Comes to c.*] Say, what is this? A movie show rehearsal, or what?

TESSIE.

She says that everything is discovered and you must escape at once. At once. At once.

[*Exit into the house at R.*]

BUDDY.

[*Pauses, then looks at the audience.*] Say, I'll bet a doughnut I'm in the wrong kind of a Sanitarium.

[*Enter JIM from rear L.*]

JIM.

Hello, Buddy.

BUDDY.

[*Meeting him at c.*] Say, do you wear suspenders?

JIM.

[*At l. c.*] Suspenders?

BUDDY.

[*At r. c.*] One of the detectives thought he might have been strangled with your suspenders. But that isn't possible if you haven't any.

JIM.

The boy's delirious.

BUDDY.

Put some cracked ice on your head and then they will never suspect you. Shh! Don't try to follow me, for you are watched. It's time for me to shoot firecrackers at the diet cook.

JIM.

What's the big idea?

BUDDY.

Oh, I'm all right, but I'm beginning to feel like a squirrel.

JIM.

A squirrel?

BUDDY.

That's the time. I just found a nut out here.

JIM.

Oh, I see. You've met one of the neurasthenics.

BUDDY.

I dunno what you call her, but she's got it bad. Where's your fi-nan-say?

JIM.

She met a crowd of girls and they insisted on buying her an engagement treat. I began to feel unnecessary and thought I'd wait here for her. Say, she's some queen, ain't she, Buddy?

BUDDY.

You're right, she is. You're some fancy little picker when it comes to fi-nan-says.

JIM.

Have you seen anything of Major Kellicott?

BUDDY.

No, and I ain't anxious for no little suburban picnics with him, either. There's something about that bird I don't like.

JIM.

Oh, he's all right. He's one of the biggest business men in New York City.

BUDDY.

That may be true, but I'm going to keep my little pile locked up with a padlock and chain whenever he's around. I don't like the color of his hair.

JIM.

Why, he's one of the richest and best known brokers in the city, Major Kellicott is.

BUDDY.

How do you know this guy is really Major Kellcott?

JIM.

Why, I saw his calling card. He gave me one when he introduced himself. [*Laughs.*] It isn't like you to be so suspicious, Buddy. I'd trust Major Kellicott with every cent I'm worth.

BUDDY.

You'd better go kinda slow with them cents. Don't do anything in a hurry. I've got to go in now and rest up a little for my operation.

JIM.

Oh, that! You won't have to rest much. It won't take ten minutes.

BUDDY.

Maybe not, but a lot of things can happen in ten minutes. Why, a feller could get killed or sump'm in only one minute.

JIM.

You're not afraid, are you?

BUDDY.

No, not afraid, but I don't want to take any unnecessary chances.

JIM.

You'd better take ether, then.

BUDDY.

Either of what?

JIM.

Just one whiff of ether and you won't know what's happening.

BUDDY.

Oh, you mean that dizzy stuff. Say, that's a good idea, I never thought of that. I'd better go in.

[Crosses to R. Enter MRS. WHIPPLE from the house, carrying a parrot's cage. She is very excited.]

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Oh, mister, Amelia's gone! Have you seen anything of her out here?

BUDDY.

No Amelias out here.

JIM.

Have you lost someone?

MRS. WHIPPLE.

My little poll-parrot. She was green with a yellow tail. Mr. Whipple gave her to me before he died. Someone has allowed her to escape. Her cage was open—the window was open—and——

[Walking up and down stage from front to back at R., wringing her hands and speaking in an excited manner.]

BUDDY.

[At R. C.] Amelia was open too?

[Follows her up and down stage.]

MRS. WHIPPLE.

[Crosses to REAR L., and looks off stage.] I couldn't take a thousand dollars for Amelia. She

was just as intelligent as a human being. [*Starts up and down stage at L.*] And now she's flown away. Oh, my nerves, my nerves! However can I live without Amelia!

[*Enter MRS. McCANN from house. She is very excited.*]

MRS. McCANN.

[*Rushes to BUDDY at R. C. and grasps his arm.*] Have you seen her? I can't find her anywhere.

BUDDY.

No, that other lady was just telling me she had got out.

MRS. McCANN.

She went down to the shore with Nurse Marjorie. And no one can find her. She's drowned, I know. My baby's drowned.

[*Starts to walk up and down at R., wringing her hands. MRS. WHIPPLE is doing the same business at L., followed by JIM, who tries to calm her.*]

BUDDY.

[*Following MRS. McCANN.*] Your baby? Was she your baby?

MRS. McCANN.

Yes, my only child. My heart is breaking. My mother's heart is breaking.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

[*To JIM.*] It's no use. You can't comfort me. I'll never see her again.

BUDDY.

Were you its mother?

MRS. McCANN.

Of course I am. Oh, I'm distracted, distracted!
[Paces up and down.]

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Where can I find another? Where can I find another?
[Paces up and down.]

BUDDY.

[To MRS. McCANN.] What did she look like?

JIM.

[To MRS. WHIPPLE.] Describe her and I will help you hunt.

MRS. McCANN.

Oh, she had long brown curls!

BUDDY.

Curls?

MRS. WHIPPLE.

She was nineteen years old and had a dear little red beak.

MRS. McCANN.

She wore a white dress and blue ribbons.

BUDDY.

Where did she wear the ribbons?

MRS. WHIPPLE.

She was green and her tail was yellow.

BUDDY.

[To MRS. McCANN.] She was green and her tail was yellow.

MRS. McCANN.

Tail? The man's a raving lunatic. She wore a little blue and white hat.

JIM.

[To MRS. WHIPPLE.] She wore a little blue and white hat.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Hat? What are you talking about?

[Enter NURSE GREGORY from house at R.]

NURSE.

What's the excitement?

MRS. McCANN.

She's been lost.

NURSE.

Who's lost?

BUDDY.

Amelia.

MRS. McCANN.

You mean Maudelia. My little girl.

BUDDY.

She was green and her tail was yellow.

MRS. McCANN.

He's raving. Put him in the confined ward.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

My parrot is lost. [*Comes to NURSE.*] Have you seen her? Someone let her out of the cage. She's gone. I'll never see her again.

MRS. McCANN.

Your parrot? What's a parrot? My little girl is lost. Drowned. Maybe kidnapped.

[*Enter MAUDELIA from house at R.*

MAUDELIA.

No, I'm not, mom. Here I am.

MRS. McCANN.

[*Clasps her in her arms.*] My darling!

BUDDY.

[*At L., to JIM.*] Green body and a yellow tail.
[*Laughs.*] Whatcha know about that?

MRS. WHIPPLE.

We are wasting time. Amelia must be found.

MAUDELIA.

I saw her fly over there. [*Points to REAR L.*

MRS. WHIPPLE.

[*To JIM.*] Will you help me find her? She's all I have to remember my husband by.

MAUDELIA.

[*At REAR L., looks off.*] There she is. Up in that tree.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Get her. Catch her. [*Rushes off.*

MRS. McCANN.

Can you climb a tree? [*To JIM.*] Maybe you can get her down.

[*Runs out at L. with MAUDELLIA and JIM.*]

BUDDY.

[*Calls after them.*] Put some salt on her tail.

NURSE.

You'd better keep quiet. Doctor Downs will be ready for you in a few minutes. [*Exits at REAR L.*]

BUDDY.

Gee, I was forgetting all about me sub-mucous infection. [*Sits at L.*] I wonder what's become of Sunshine.

[*Enter MARY from R., coming from the house.*]

MARY.

I was looking for you.

BUDDY.

[*Meets her at c.*] I've been looking for you ever since I first saw you. Gee, it's been awful lonesome all by myself.

MARY.

The doctor will be ready for you in a few minutes. I've arranged the sponges and the ether cones.

BUDDY.

Say, what is this ether stuff anyway?

MARY.

You just hold it to your nose and take a long breath and that's all you remember until the doctor says, "Wake up!"

BUDDY.

I won't mind it at all, if you're going to be there with me.

MARY.

I'll be right there. It's really not much of an operation. The doctor says you have a high blood pressure, too.

BUDDY.

Does my blood press?

MARY.

And the sub-mucous infection has made your tongue swollen.

BUDDY.

It wasn't the infection that made me tongue swell.

MARY.

What was it?

BUDDY.

[*Laughs.*] I ate a club sandwich and got a couple of splinters out of the club.

MARY.

[*Laughs.*] Nothing ever troubles you, does it?

BUDDY.

I don't let it. And you ain't as blue as you was this morning, are you?

MARY.

No, I'm all right, I guess.

BUDDY.

That bird Kellicott scared you, didn't he?

MARY.

Yes, he did. What's he doing up here?

BUDDY.

He's trying to interest me pal Jim Anthony in some New York business deal.

MARY.

You take my advice and tell your pal to have nothing to do with him.

BUDDY.

He ain't straight, is he?

MARY.

Straight? That man's so crooked that when he dies they'll have to bury him in a bass drum.

BUDDY.

Has he seen you?

MARY.

Yes.

BUDDY.

He didn't say anything to you, did he? He didn't cut up rough?

MARY.

He wanted me to go to the city with him and I refused.

BUDDY.

Gee, I'm glad you refused. He—he—ain't got no claim on you, has he? I mean, you ain't married to him, or nothing like that?

MARY.

No, nothing like that. He has no claim on me at all. I never want to speak to him again; I never want to see him again as long as I live.

BUDDY.

I think he's trying to get Jim to invest some money, er sump'm.

MARY.

Yes, that's one of his tricks. You warn your friend to have nothing to do with him. He's a crook, an ex-convict.

BUDDY.

You bet I'll warn Jim. I'll tell him to-night.

MARY.

I suppose you'll be leaving to-morrow?

BUDDY.

Yeah, I guess so. I kinda hate to leave this place. There's lots of attractions here. Maybe I'll stay on two or three days in case I have any more of them sub-mucous infections.

MARY.

Then you like it here?

BUDDY.

Do I? Gee, why three or four days here and I'd be living the life of Reilly. Like it? Why, I'm sitting on the world right now. I like the Sanitarium and the patients and the doctors and the nurses. I never saw such fine nurses in all my life.

MARY.

Do you tell that to all the girls you meet?

BUDDY.

[*Laughs bashfully.*] No'm, I don't. You ain't got my number at all. The only girl almost I ever talked to in me life was me mother. I'm jest naturally bashful, I guess. Why, whenever I hear a skirt rustle on the street I always run into a pool-hall or a cigar store, or some place where they won't let 'em in. But somehow it's different with you. Say, what's your name?

MARY.

My name is Mary. Mary Ellis.

BUDDY.

Mary! Gee, that's a nice name. That's the nicest name I ever heard. Mary, it makes you think of church and music and everything that is good and holy. It's a nice name, Mary is.

MARY.

I think it's time for you to go up-stairs now.

[*Crosses to R.*]

BUDDY.

Are you going with me?

[*Crosses to R.*]

MARY.

Yes. I administer the ether.

BUDDY.

If you administer it I wouldn't be skeered to take it, even if it was arsenic.

MARY.

We mustn't keep the doctor waiting.

[Exit into house.]

BUDDY.

Gee, she's a nice girl.

[Exit after her into house at R. Enter MRS. WHIPPLE and NURSE GREGORY from REAR L.]

NURSE.

Be calm, Mrs. Whipple. Maudelia is climbing the tree.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

But there's a cat after my parrot. I saw it in the tree. Oh, my nerves, my nerves!

[Sinks in chair at L. of table.]

NURSE.

[Back of table.] Never mind. You must be quiet, or I'll have to take you inside. You'll have to go to bed.*[Enter JIM from REAR L. He comes down L.]*

JIM.

The kid's up in the tree.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Has she got the cage?

JIM.

Sure.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

If she opens the door of the cage Amelia will hop right in.

[Enter MRS. McCANN from REAR L. She comes down L. C.]

MRS. McCANN.

In spite of all I could say or do, my baby child climbed up in that tree like a monkey.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Has she caught her? Did she get Amelia?

[Enter MAUDELIA from REAR L. with cage.
The cage contains a large, live cat and is wrapped in MAUDELIA'S apron.

MAUDELIA.

[Comes down c.] There it is.

[Shows cage concealed in apron.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

[Rises.] My little Amelia! You've brought her back to me? You darling child. Here, I'll give you a dollar. [Gives it to MAUDELIA.] Now give me my parrot. [Takes cage and removes apron, showing the cat to the audience.] Why, this is only a cat. Where's my Amelia? There's nothing but a cat inside the cage.

MAUDELIA.

Aw, that's all right. Amelia's inside the cat.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Inside the ——!

[Screams loudly and faints in the chair.

MRS. McCANN.

[Taking MAUDELIA and rushing her to R.] You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

[Drags her out at L.

NURSE.

Here. Help me get her into the office.

[JIM and NURSE lead MRS. WHIPPLE out at R. Enter SYLVIA from REAR L. with eight girls dressed in light-colored organdies, four coming from L. and four from R. SYLVIA sings "Just a Week from To-day," published by the Whitmark Music Co., Whitmark Building, New York City, and the girls do dance steps at rear. JIM enters and sings second verse. All sing chorus, and dance off. For encore, the orchestra plays a Wedding March and a formal wedding scene is pantomimed with JIM as groom, SYLVIA as bride, a preacher, flower girls, bridesmaids and ushers. After the pantomime all sing the chorus of the song again and march out. This makes a very effective musical number and should be given if possible, as it always makes a decided impression on any audience. All dance out at REAR L. Enter NURSE GREGORY from the house at R., wheeling in MR. BUTTERNIP, who is very weak. BUTTERNIP is groaning and has his head bound up in red flannel and white linen. He carries a piece of ice wrapped in a towel and is holding it to his head.]

BUTTERNIP.

Don't jar me. Roll me easy, 'cause this is my last day on earth. Ohhh!

NURSE.

[Wheeling him to L. front.] I think you'd be better off in bed.

BUTTERNIP.

The doctor told me to get out in the air. Oh, I've been in hospitals and Sanitariums for the past ten years, but I've never been as low as I am now. My feet are like ice and my head is burning up. If I close my eyes I see pink elephants fighting blue tigers with a star-spangled black background.

NURSE.

You know you shouldn't have taken all that tonic. It's a wonder it didn't kill you.

BUTTERNIP.

Tonic! Oh, don't ever mention that word in my presence again. Fan me! Oh, my head, my head! I'll bet it's grown seven inches in thirty minutes. Oh!

[Leans back in wheel-chair and closes his eyes.]

Enter MRS. WHIPPLE from the house at R.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

I can't imagine how Amelia got out of her cage. It's heart-breaking. She was all I had, and now she's gone. *[Sobs.]* I'd like to kill that cat.

[Sits R. of table.]

BUTTERNIP.

Nurse, for the love of mercy, tell that human Niagara falls to keep still. Oh, my head!

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Poor little Amelia, who could talk just like a human being. She was Mr. Whipple's last gift to me. And now she's gone! *[Sobs.]*

[Enter JIM and SYLVIA from REAR L. They come down C.]

JIM.

Nurse, have you seen anything of Major Kellicott?

NURSE.

Yes, sir. He's writing in the office. Here he comes now.

[Enter MAJOR from the house. He meets JIM at c.

MAJOR.

Ah, here you are. That's good. I have the papers all ready. Of course you understand that these papers are a mere formality. The regular papers will be prepared later in the presence of our lawyers. However, these are legal. They will serve as a receipt for your investment.

[Sits L. of table. JIM stands near him.

BUTTERNIP.

Oh, this is my last hour on earth. Nurse, get me a pillow. Hurry and get me a pillow to ease my dying moments. Get me two pillows. Oh, my head.

[NURSE exits at R., into house.

MAJOR.

I have made out a check to my firm. All you have to do is to sign the check and take the memorandum papers.

JIM.

How much is the check for?

MAJOR.

Three hundred thousand. See, it's all ready for you to sign.

JIM.

[*Whistles.*] Three hundred thousand? Whew! That ought to buy out the whole Santa Fé Railroad.

MAJOR.

You have that much in the bank, haven't you?

JIM.

Oh, sure. But it's an awful lot of money to sign for.

SYLVIA.

[*Near him.*] But think of the wonderful opportunity.

MAJOR.

[*Hands JIM a fountain pen.*] Will you sign?

JIM.

You bet I'll sign. Here's where I soak the Santa Fé in the solar plexus.

[*Enter NURSE GREGORY from house with a large white pillow in her hand.*]

NURSE.

[*At REAR C.*] Mr. Brady is having an awful time.

JIM.

[*Pauses.*] His operation?

NURSE.

Oh, that was all right, but he's under the influence of the ether. He's in the hall down-stairs and he's acting like a crazy man. First he laughs and then he cries. I never saw anyone so affected by ether before.

MAJOR.

Sign right there, on that line.

[JIM signs. "Hurry" music. Enter BUDDY from the house at R. He enters rapidly, speaks loudly, rapidly and almost incoherently.]

BUDDY.

And the green grass grows all round, all round,
and the green grass grows all around.

NURSE.

[Catches him.] You must come up-stairs again,
Mr. Brady.

BUDDY.

I've been taking ether, and the green grass grows
all around. [Swings NURSE as for a dance.] I'm
going round and round and round. [Comes down to
JIM.] Sunshine is everywhere and I've got my full
share.

MAJOR.

[To JIM.] Here is the contract, give me the check.

BUDDY.

Give me the check. [Takes the check and the
contract and tears them in little bits.] See the snow.
[Sings to tune of "London Bridge is Falling Down,"
as he scatters the bits of paper like snow.] See the
snow is falling down, falling down, falling down.
See the —

NURSE.

[Grasps his arm and tries to pull him to R.] Come,
you must go in. You must!

BUDDY.

[*Kisses the NURSE.*] Hello, Sunshine. Did you come out to see the snow-storm?

[*Seizes the pillow from her and throws it at BUTTERNIP who has risen and is watching the scene anxiously. The pillow hits him and he topples over, capsizing the wheel-chair. General confusion.*

QUICK CURTAIN

[*Second Picture:—NURSE and JIM are leading BUDDY off at R.*

[*Third Picture:—Everyone who appeared in the act stands bowing to the audience.*

ACT III

SCENE.—*The same as the first and second Acts. Time, night. Blue shaded lights shine in on the stage from L. Lighted Japanese lanterns dress the stage. Two golf balls are on the table.*

Dance music takes up the curtain disclosing JIM and SYLVIA, BUDDY and MAUDELIA, and several other couples dancing. BUTTERNIP is seated in his wheel-chair at L. BUDDY dances rather awkwardly.

MAUDELIA.

No, no, this way! [*She pulls him around.*] Now count, one two three and then over that way. Get it?

BUDDY.

[*Dancing with her.*] One, two, three and then over. I got it. [*Dances and counts for three measures, then bumps heavily into JIM.*] Oh, I beg your pardon. [*Stops at R. C. and mops his forehead with a red silk handkerchief.*] Whoo, that's hot work.

MAUDELIA.

Am I making you tired? I thought a great big man like you could dance all night. Come on!

BUDDY.

[*Panting.*] Just a minute. Wait till I get me second wind.

[*Enter MRS. McCANN from R. 2. She comes down c.*

MRS. McCANN.

Why, the Sanitarium is becoming as lively as one of Mrs. [*Local name.*] house-parties. [*To BUDDY.*] Aren't you dancing, Mr. Brady?

BUDDY.

Yes'm, no'm, that is, I was just getting ready to start for the home plate.

MRS. McCANN.

[*Putting her arms around him, in dancing position.*] Come on, then. I'm just dying to show you the new cat-step.

BUDDY.

[*Backing away from her toward MAUDELIA who is down R.*] Well, I,—er,—I,—

MRS. McCANN.

Oh, Maudelia will excuse you. She mustn't monopolize the men. She's entirely too young to dance, and I'm sure she doesn't know all the new steps. [*Dancing into his arms.*] Come along, the music is entrancing.

MAUDELIA.

Go on, Buddy, she'll show you the cat-step. It's the best thing she does. Don't mind me, mom, the dance will be good for your rheumatism.

MRS. McCANN.

Maudelia, whatever are you thinking of? I never have the rheumatism. Fortunately that's one affliction I am spared. [*The dance ends.*]

BUDDY.

[*To Mrs. McCANN.*] Thank you. I'll tell the world you're some dancer for an old lady.

MRS. McCANN.

Old lady! Well, you may be a famous baseball player, sir, but you certainly are not used to good society. [*Crosses to R. 2, followed by BUDDY.*]

BUDDY.

No, I didn't mean that.

MRS. McCANN.

That will do. Of course I know I'm not a *débutante*, but I certainly am not ready for knitting needles and a crutch. Old lady! Well, I like that! [*Exits at R. 2 indignantly.*]

BUDDY.

Whoo, I kinda got me foot in it, didn't I? [*Down to table to MAUDELIA.*] Your mom certainly got up in the air, I'll tell the bleachers.

MAUDELIA.

Aw, what's the difference? [*Takes up a golf ball from the table.*] Say, show me how you pitch your sky-rocket. [*To others.*] You orter see him handle a ball. This is the way he pitches a sky-rocket. [*Hands ball to BUDDY.*]

BUDDY.

You swing your right arm twice around this way, slap it with your left over your head, and shoot her at the moon.

[*Illustrates, but does not throw the ball.*]

MAUDELIA.

Now show the folks how you pitch your red-hot baby.

BUDDY.

Aw, that's easy. Rub your ball in the dirt. [*Illustrates.*] Twist yerself into a corkscrew, do a windmill wid your right and watch it burn.

[*Pretends to throw.*]

MAUDELIA.

[*Takes the other ball from the table.*] Is this the way? [*Imitates him.*]

BUDDY.

Sure. You got it the first time. You'll be playing on the big league some day.

MAUDELIA.

Aw, you know they won't let girls play.

JIM.

By the time you are grown up, Maudelia, girls will be doing everything.

BUDDY.

And everybody.

BUTTERNIP.

[*Gives a cackling chuckle.*] He, he, he. Did you hear that? He says girls will be doing everybody. Ain't he the funniest feller!

MAUDELIA.

[*Places her golf ball on the table.*] Let's see how far you can throw. [*Leads BUDDY to REAR L. and they look off and down.*] See that great big tree way down there. I'll bet you can't hit that.

BUDDY.

Ho, I couldn't miss that with me eyes shut. Keep your eye on the tree.

[Throws ball out and apparently down.]

MAUDELIA.

You hit it. Say, mister, you're a wonder *[Comes down to BUTTERNIP at L. front.]* Say, Mr. Butternip, he hit it. He's some pitcher, I'll tell the world.

[Chorus boys and girls wander off at R. and L., quietly.]

BUTTERNIP.

Wonderful, perfectly wonderful what the human arm can do.

MAUDELIA.

Could you throw a ball like that, Mr. Butternip?

BUTTERNIP.

Could I? Well, I should say I could. I used to do it even better than that before I came to the Sanitarium.

MAUDELIA.

I bet you couldn't toss a high ball like he can.

BUTTERNIP.

Toss a highball? He, he, he. You bet I could. That's the very best thing I ever did was to toss a highball. Sometimes I tossed fifteen or twenty of 'em. Why, sister, I was the champeen highball tosser of Peory, Illinois, when I was younger.

[They talk in pantomime.]

SYLVIA.

[Seated R. of table.] Oh, Jim, my ring!

JIM.

[*Seated L. of table.*] What about it?

SYLVIA.

It isn't on my finger. I must have left it in my room. [Rises.]

JIM.

Never mind. It's perfectly safe.

SYLVIA.

[*Crossing to R. 2.*] I want to make sure. [Exits R. 2.]

BUDDY.

[*Comes from REAR L., down C. to table.*] What's become of your financial friend, Jim?

JIM.

Oh, the Major? I believe he's in the Sanitarium. Want him?

BUDDY.

I wouldn't take him as a gift. Believe me, pal, he's crooked, that guy is.

JIM.

Is that why you tore up the check and the contract?

BUDDY.

[*Laughs.*] Naw, I didn't know what I was doing. I was under the influence of ether.

JIM.

I don't think you were under any influence at all, except suspicion.

BUDDY.

[*Laughs.*] Maybe it was the sunshine that did it. Anyhow he didn't make the deal. I put the kibosh on that for Jake. To my way of thinking I saved you about three hundred thousand dollars.

JIM.

Then you don't think he's on the square?

BUDDY.

He's seven thousand miles from the square. He's so crooked that he lives in the roundhouse.

JIM.

What makes you think so?

BUDDY.

Oh, I just got a hunch, that's all.

[*Enter MAJOR from R. 2.*]

MAJOR.

[*Coming down R.*] Ah, Mr. Anthony, enjoying the little party in honor of your fiancée, are you?

JIM.

Yes, we've been having a little dance out here.

MAUDELIA.

[*Down L. with BUTTERNIP.*] And we're going to have ice-cream in the dining-room.

MAJOR.

[*To JIM.*] I intend to leave on the early morning train. Hadn't we better settle up our little bit of business before I go back to the city?

JIM.

I think I'll wait and call on you in your office.

MAJOR.

There's no time like the present, you know. [*Down R. of table.*] Come, now, all you have to do is to sign this check. I made out a new one.

[*Presents fountain pen to JIM.*]

JIM.

[*At L. of table.*] I don't think I'll sign it just now, Major.

MAJOR.

But the shares in our company will be snatched up just as soon as I return to town. You don't know what a good thing you're missing.

BUDDY.

[*Down c., watching them.*] You're going to miss a pretty good thing yourself, I'm thinking.

MAJOR.

[*Angrily.*] I'm not addressing my remarks to you, sir.

BUDDY.

That don't hurt my feelings none. I don't care if you never address your remarks to me.

MAJOR.

[*Crosses to him.*] I've half a mind to ———
[*Clenches his fists.*]

BUDDY.

[*Smiles at him calmly.*] You'd better change your half a mind.

MAJOR.

[*At c., turns to JIM.*] Surely you are not going to allow this Bowery boy to influence your judgment, Mr. Anthony.

JIM.

[*Rises and faces MAJOR.*] This Bowery boy, as you call him, is my pal, my chum. And whatever he has to say I'm ready to hear at any time and at any place.

MAJOR.

But he knows nothing of business, absolutely nothing. A mere ball player ——

JIM.

Maybe he doesn't know much about business, Major Kellicott, but he has the reputation for being a pretty good judge of human nature for all that.

BUDDY.

[*At l. c.*] You tell 'em, old trolley line, you got the power.

JIM.

I've made up my mind and don't care to discuss the matter any longer.

MAJOR.

But ——

JIM.

I won't sign the check now, and there's an end to it. When you get back to the city I'll come to see you with my attorney and we'll investigate your offer in the proper place.

MAJOR.

[*Bows to JIM.*] Just as you please. [*Turns to BUDDY.*] And as for you, sir —

BUDDY.

Shift into low, shift into low, you're running over a sandy road.

MAJOR.

I won't bandy words with you.

BUDDY.

That won't make me lose any sleep.

MAJOR.

I wish you all a very good evening. [*Bows.*]

BUDDY.

[*Addressing an imaginary person at L. front.*] Jeems, show the gentleman to his limousine.

MAJOR.

[*Angrily.*] You haven't heard the last of this, sir.
[*Crosses to REAR L.*]

BUDDY.

That so?

MAJOR.

You'll hear from me again.

BUDDY.

That's nice. Drop me a picture postcard sometime and tell me how the Santa Fé is getting along.

MAJOR.

Bah!

[*Exits at REAR L.*]

BUDDY.

He talks like a sheep.

BUTTERNIP.

[*Down L. to MAUDELIA.*] He, he, he! He said "Bah" and he told him he talked like a sheep. Ain't he the funniest feller!

JIM.

What have you got against the Major, Buddy?

BUDDY.

I don't like the cut of his necktie, that's all. Take it from me, Jim, that bird ain't what he pretends to be at all. The trouble with him is that he's got a good front but a crooked back. His looks are eight cylinder, but there's a screw loose somewhere and he's only hittin' on two. In plain words I think he's a crook.
[*Enter MARY from R. 2.*]

MARY.

[*Crosses at back to L.*] Your mother is looking for you, Maudelia.

BUDDY.

Gee, the clouds is all faded away and the sunshine's out again.

MAUDELIA.

Sunshine? Why, it's eight o'clock at night. Oh, I know, he means you. [*To MARY.*] Say, is he your beau?

MARY.

Why, honey, of course not. I never saw him before to-day.

MAUDELIA.

That don't make no difference. He's a quick worker. You ought to see him pitch his red-hot baby.

[Enter MRS. WHIPPLE from R. She comes down R.]

MRS. WHIPPLE.

I thought I'd better come out and get a breath of air, it's stifling in the Sanitarium. [Sees MARY.] Why, Mary, you gave me such a shock.

MARY.

I gave you a shock? How?

MRS. WHIPPLE.

[At R. front.] When you came out of Miss Deane's room about half an hour ago.

MARY.

Miss Deane's room? Why, I didn't—did you see me come out of Miss Deane's room?

MRS. WHIPPLE.

I saw someone. Just as I was starting for the dining-room. It was so dark in the hall I couldn't make out who it was.

MARY.

[At L. front.] But why do you think I came out?

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Because whoever it was I followed her and she went into your room.

MARY.

Are you sure?

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Yes. For I struck a match and looked at the number on the door.

MARY.

But I haven't been in my room this evening.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Well, it was someone. Miss Deane's door opened softly and someone slipped out and went sneaking down the hall to the nurses' rooms. I followed and whoever it was went into your room and locked the door.

BUDDY.

Was it a nurse?

MRS. WHIPPLE.

I couldn't tell whether it was man or woman.

MARY.

Maybe one of the nurses went in there to rest. They often do that.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

I thought it might have been a burglar, and my nerves haven't recovered yet. [*Sinks in chair at R. of table.*] I don't know when I've been so upset.

[*Enter NURSE GREGORY from R. 2. She is excited.*]

NURSE.

Oh, Mr. Anthony, Mr. Anthony!

JIM.

[*Crosses to her at R. 2.*] Yes? What is it?

NURSE.

It's Miss Deane. She wants you to come to her at once.

JIM.

Is anything wrong?

NURSE.

She sent me to find you. "Tell him to come at once," she says. She's in the Superintendent's office.
[Exits at R. 2, followed by JIM.]

MRS. WHIPPLE.

My nerves are all unstrung. *[Weeps softly.]* I'll never go in that hall in the dark again if I live to be a hundred. I wonder what Miss Deane wanted with Mr. Anthony.

BUDDY.

[At L. of table.] Maybe she wanted him to dance the Peruvian Galoo-loo with her, or sump'm.

BUTTERNIP.

Young fellers are always ready to do anything girls want 'em to when they're in love.

MAUDELIA.

[Who has been standing with MARY at REAR L., comes down to MR. BUTTERNIP.] Say, Mr. Butternip, how does it feel to be in love?

BUTTERNIP.

Makes you feel like a yaller dog caught stealing eggs and one of 'em spoiled.

MAUDELIA.

I know what love is.

BUDDY.

You do? Well, what is it?

MAUDELIA.

[*To BUTTERNIP.*] It's the lies you fellows tell us girls. [*Men laugh.*]

BUDDY.

She ain't so far wrong at that.

MARY.

Come, Maudelia.

MAUDELIA.

All right, let's go and see what kind of refreshments they're going to have. Mom said they'd have ice-cream, but you can't have any, Mr. Butternip.

BUTTERNIP.

Why can't I?

MAUDELIA.

[*At R. 2, with MARY.*] Because you drank up all your tonic. The Doc says you can't have anything fancy for a week. [*Laughs.*] That must have been an awfully funny tonic, it made you act so queer.
[*Runs out at R. 2, followed by MARY.*]

BUDDY.

Cute little kid, ain't she?

BUTTERNIP.

No, she's not. She's entirely too fresh.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

She's spoiled to death. A sanitarium isn't any place for a child of her age.

BUTTERNIP.

I don't like children. They make me so excited.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

You haven't any of your own then?

BUTTERNIP.

No, thank the Lord. I'm a bachelor.

BUDDY.

Then you don't believe in marriage?

BUTTERNIP.

Oh, yes I do. For some folks.

BUDDY.

I think it's great. I'd get married myself, if I could.

BUTTERNIP.

What's holding you back? A license only costs a dollar and you can get a girl for nothing.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Such sentiments!

BUTTERNIP.

For a five dollar bill you can get married and have four dollars change to start housekeeping. You can live on the wedding presents for a year.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Much you know about it.

BUDDY.

If I ever do get married I'm going to have a quiet wedding and no presents.

BUTTERNIP.

No presents? Nonsense; a man who takes pity on a woman and marries her is entitled to all of the wedding presents he can gouge out of her relatives.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Mercy, how you do talk.

BUTTERNIP.

When you figure it up a man exchanges his life and liberty for a set of furniture, a parlor rug, six rocking chairs, two pair of slippers that don't fit, a smoking jacket and a woman's board bill for life.

BUDDY.

[*Seated L. of table.*] Then you think marriage is a nice easy graft?

BUTTERNIP.

[*Seated in wheel-chair down L.*] Graft? It's a bunco.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

And yet they keep building schoolhouses every year.

BUDDY.

Why is it a bunco?

BUTTERNIP.

In a few months the rocking chairs break, the furniture wears out, your wife breaks the slippers over your bean, the smoking jacket is gone, the parlor rug is gone, but the wife, she stays on forever. You can't lose her. She doesn't wear out.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Then there's the landlord to pay.

BUTTERNIP.

And the grocer to pay.

BUDDY.

And the butcher to pay.

BUTTERNIP.

And your wife's mother comes to visit and there's the devil to pay.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

Such language!

BUTTERNIP.

Excuse me, I didn't know you were listening.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

I wasn't listening, but I couldn't help overhearing, could I?

BUTTERNIP.

I'm going in. I've got to see the doctor in a hurry.
[Wheels chair over to R. 2, rapidly.]

BUDDY.

Why the hurry? Are you sick?

BUTTERNIP.

Nup. Thirsty.

[Exits at R. 2 in chair. Enter MRS. McCANN from R. 2.]

MRS. McCANN.

What's the matter with that old man?

BUDDY.

Who? Mr. Buttermilk? He's in a hurry.

MRS. McCANN.

[*Comes down L.*] There's something going on in the Superintendent's office.

BUDDY.

An operation. He's extracting a hundred dollars from a rich patient.

MRS. McCANN.

No, it's something serious. They've sent for Mary and she's in there now. Nurse Gregory knows all about it. She'll tell us. She couldn't keep a secret if it was nailed in.

[*Enter NURSE GREGORY from R. 2.*

MRS. WHIPPLE.

What's going on in the Superintendent's office, nurse?

NURSE.

Oh, I can't tell. It's something dreadful. Sunshine just came out and she's crying. She's packing up her things. She's going to leave the Sanitarium.

BUDDY.

[*Starts up.*] Sunshine? What have they been doing to her?

NURSE.

It seems that somebody went into Miss Deane's room and stole her diamond ring.

MRS. McCANN.

[*Down L., in swing.*] It wasn't Sunshine. I'll stake my life on that.

BUDDY.

[*Down c., standing.*] And so will I. Two lives.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

[*Seated R. of table.*] They can't make me believe it. No matter if someone did slip into her room. I know an honest woman when I see one and Sunshine hasn't a dishonest hair in her whole head, I know.

NURSE.

[*At R. 2 entrance.*] The Superintendent wants to see you in the office, Mrs. Whipple. Mr. Anthony said he heard you say that you saw someone creep out of Miss Deane's room and slip into Sunshine's room.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

I did. But it wasn't Mary.

NURSE.

How do you know it wasn't?

MRS. WHIPPLE.

She said it wasn't.

NURSE.

She wouldn't say anything at all in the office. She just said she didn't do it. Mr. Anthony asked her who slipped into her room and she appeared confused. Anyhow, she wouldn't say another word. They're waiting for you.

MRS. WHIPPLE.

[*Begins to weep.*] Oh, I can't go in. It's just like being on a witness stand and my nerves are all unstrung. Maybe I didn't see anyone at all. Maybe it was just my imagination. Oh, I can't stand it, I simply can't stand it.

[*Exits R. 2, followed by NURSE.*

BUDDY.

I think I'd better go and talk to Jim. I know she never stole no diamond ring.

MRS. McCANN.

Of course she didn't. But maybe she is trying to shield someone who did.

BUDDY.

She's a girl in a million, she is. I'd trust her with my life. Why, I'd just as soon think me own mother was a thief as that she was.

MRS. McCANN.

You're not in love with her, are you?

BUDDY.

[*Bashfully twists foot.*] I dunno what you call it. All I know is that I never met a girl like her before. Why, every time I see her I feel like a mule had kicked in the left side of me chest.

[*Enter TESSIE from R. 2, dramatically.*

TESSIE.

[*Comes to R. C. and speaks to BUDDY earnestly.*] She said to tell you to fly at once. Everything has been discovered. The police are on your trail.

BUDDY.

On my trail? They don't think I swiped the ring, do they?

TESSIE.

They think you strangled him with your suspenders. But they haven't found a clue.

BUDDY.

Oh, you're still after the suspenders? I thought it was something else.

TESSIE.

She says to tell you to fly at once. Everything has been discovered. The police are on your trail.

MRS. McCANN.

You'd better go back in the dining-room. How did you get away?

TESSIE.

I climbed down the water spout on a morning glory and skated the rest of the way on ice.

BUDDY.

You'd better climb back up. This ain't no place for climbers.

TESSIE.

They're dancing in the dining-room. I am going to climb up on a diamond and watch them.

BUDDY.

Climb up on a diamond? Say, lady, excuse me, but you're a little loose in the gear.

TESSIE.

Didn't you ever see anyone climb up on a diamond?

BUDDY.

No, did you?

TESSIE.

Of course I did. I've seen a jeweler mount a diamond in his front window.

BUDDY.

[*To audience.*] She ain't crazy, she's just got an up-stairs attic for rent, that's all.

MRS. McCANN.

Come with me. I'll take you in to see the dancing.
Come along. [*Exits at R. 2.*]

TESSIE.

[*In doorway at R. 2.*] She said to tell you to fly at once.

BUDDY.

Shoo fly!

TESSIE.

[*Earnestly.*] Everything has been discovered. The police are on your trail. [*Laughs wildly.*] Ha, ha! The police are on your trail. [*Exits at R. 2.*]

BUDDY.

[*At L.*] Somebody's framed sump'm up on Sunshine. She wouldn't steal a cent if she was starving. Why, she's a girl in a million. And they said she was going away. Fired, I suppose, and they've tied a label of thief on her. The poor little kid, the poor little kid. [*Soft music: The chorus of "Mother*

Machree." MARY enters slowly from R. 2 and crosses to REAR L. She wears street clothes and hat and carries her grip. Take plenty of time crossing the stage. Her face expresses grief.] Ain't you even going to say good-bye? [Comes to c.

MARY.

[Turns at REAR L.] I didn't suppose you'd care to speak to me now. Folks won't have anything to do with me any more.

BUDDY.

Is that the kind of a guy you think I am?

MARY.

[Takes two steps toward him.] No, I didn't think so. You're good and clean and straight, you are.

BUDDY.

[Takes a step toward her.] And I never desert a pal when they're in trouble. I'm going to help you, kid, if it takes every cent I've got. I'm your friend and I'm going to stand by you till the cows come home.

MARY.

[Extends her hand.] Thank you, sir.

BUDDY.

Let's talk the thing over for a minute. Why don't you come with me back to the Sup'intendent and explain everything?

MARY.

Oh, I can't, I can't. You know what happened, don't you? Miss Deane's ring has been stolen. Mrs. Whipple thought she saw me coming from the room.

She saw someone slip into my room, and I couldn't explain. They think I'm a thief, everyone thinks so. And—I—can't—even—explain. [*Weeps.*]

BUDDY.

I don't think so. I know you're straight. I know you never took that ring.

MARY.

But I can't give any explanation. I can't tell what I know. All I can do is to go away. Miss Deane wouldn't allow me to be arrested, but the Superintendent said I'd have to leave at once. He asked me to tell who I was shielding, but I wouldn't tell. I couldn't. So—so—they branded me as a thief and sent me away. [*End music.*]

BUDDY.

You're trying to shield someone else, ain't you? [*She looks at him, but does not reply.*] I know you are, and I got a pretty good idea who it is, too.

MARY.

Maybe it's best that I should go away and try to start all over again. I've been happy here. Happy, for the first time in my life. And, now—it's—all over. I'll have to make another start somewhere.

BUDDY.

Oh, maybe it ain't as serious as you think. It's just a foul ball, that's all. It's what they call an error. What's one little error?

MARY.

But my whole life has been like that. This is the first time I have ever had a chance—and now I've lost it.

BUDDY.

There's good days coming, little one. They say every cloud has a silver lining, and it's true. Every baseball fan knows that. Life is just like a ball game. There's fouls and errors and strikes, but there's balls, too, and home runs and victory, if you've got the nerve to fight it out. When you first come to the bat you're full of pep and the joy of life.

MARY.

That's youth.

BUDDY.

[*Dramatically acting out the lines.*] You're at the bat! The ball is happiness and it's sailing right toward you. But he's a wise guy, that pitcher, and it ain't going to be as easy as you think it is. You see him twist and zoo-ie! [*Imitates pitching.*] Your bat is ready. It comes. You fan the air and the bunch shouts, "Strike one!"

MARY.

A failure. Oh, I know that part of it. I've always failed.

BUDDY.

But you're young and fresh and confident. You're more careful now, you study the twist of the pitcher and the curve of the ball. You've got his number. This time you're bound to win. You know it. You feel it tingling in every nerve. You'll show 'em. You've got the goods and it's up to you to deliver. The pitcher thinks you're a dub, but you know better. See him smile! Hear the bleachers cheer him. He's getting ready. It comes. You hit wild, and the umpire calls "Strike two!"

MARY.

Another failure.

BUDDY.

The crowd jeers and mocks you. The sky is dark, all the youth and confidence and "pep" are gone. You tremble with shame and bow your head, a failure. A mocking voice seems to whisper, "You can't do it, it's not in you. You're a dub, a mutt. Give it up. What's the use? You can't do it, you can't do it!" What are you going to do? Give up? No, no, no! You ain't a piker, you're there to do your best, but you're dazed and heartsick with failure. [*Illustrates.*] See the pitcher! He's crouching like a demon. You tremble. Then something big comes in your throat and you feel yourself again. You'll show him, it's now or never, it's your last chance! It comes. Zoo-ie! [*Excited, loud.*] You got it. Whoof! Ball one! Up in the air. [*Look up at ball.*] Run, boy, run. Now, slide, slide! A home run. Joy! You've made it. You've won, you've won and victory is yours.

MARY.

[*Slowly.*] Then—you think—there really is a chance for me?

BUDDY.

I'll tell the world I do. But you've got to start fair. You've got to explain everything. No one can hurt you. I'll protect you.

MARY.

What do you think I ought to do?

BUDDY.

I think you ought to tell the Sup'intendent everything, let the blame fall where it will. I've got a hunch it's this major guy.

MARY.

Yes, it is. It is.

BUDDY.

Why should you shield him? What claim has he got on you?

MARY.

He isn't a major. He's a sham, a fraud, a criminal. He's my stepfather.

BUDDY.

Then why not let him take the medicine he deserves?

MARY.

He'd kill me if I didn't shield him.

BUDDY.

Don't you believe it. You ain't fighting a lone game any longer. It's the two of us. Me and you. Won't you give me the right to help you? [*Pause.*] Won't you? Won't you, Sunshine?

MARY.

You want me? Why, I'm only a nurse, a working girl.

BUDDY.

I'd rather have you than all the queens in the world.

[*Enter MAUDELLIA from R. 2.*

MAUDELIA.

You're going to miss the ice-cream if you don't hurry.

BUDDY.

We're just coming in, ain't we, Sunshine?

MARY.

Yes—we're going in. I'll tell the Superintendent everything. *[They cross to R. 2.]*

BUDDY.

And you'll never have anything to worry about again. I'm going to take care of you.

MAUDELIA.

Say, how does it feel to be in love?

BUDDY.

It's great, kid. It's the greatest thing in the world. *[Exits R. 2, with MARY.]*

MAUDELIA.

Gee, I wish somebody was in love with me.

[Exits R. 2, slowly. Pause. Enter MAJOR from REAR L., cautiously looking around.]

MAJOR.

I wonder what's become of Mary. I must have a word with her to-night. If she'll only keep a still tongue in her head I can get away with the sparkler at least. *[Takes ring from vest pocket and looks at it.]* It ought to be good for a thousand, anyway.

[Enter TESSIE from R. 2.]

TESSIE.

Say!

MAJOR.

[*Hastily conceals the ring.*] Yes?

TESSIE.

She said to tell you to fly at once.

MAJOR.

Fly at once? Why?

TESSIE.

Everything has been discovered.

MAJOR.

Did Mary say that?

TESSIE.

You must fly at once. The police are on your trail.

MAJOR.

The police! [*Hurries to REAR L.*] I'll go this way. [*Hurries out at REAR L.*]

TESSIE.

[*Laughs loudly.*] The police are on his trail. [*Screams.*] Help, help! He's making his escape. Help, help!

[*Enter NURSE and MRS. WHIPPLE from R. 2.*]

NURSE.

Tessie, come in the house at once.

[*Enter all the other characters from R. 2.*]

TESSIE.

He's making his escape.

JIM.

Who is?

TESSIE.

I told him to fly at once. And he flew. [*Rushes to REAR L., and points off and downward.*] There he goes. The police are on his trail.

BUDDY.

[*Looks off REAR L.*] It's him. It's the Major and he's running like a hound.

SYLVIA.

Catch him, Jim. He's got my diamond.

BUDDY.

[*Gets golf ball from table.*] I'll just wing his flight. [*Throws ball off L.*]

JIM.

[*After slight pause.*] You hit him. You got him. Buddy, you're a wonder.

[*Rushes out L., followed by all except BUDDY and MARY, NURSE pushing BUTTERNIP in his wheel-chair.*]

BUDDY.

Jim'll get him.

MARY.

But I'm afraid.

BUDDY.

Oh, I guess I can take care of you now. We're engaged, you know.

MARY.

Are we?

BUDDY.

I'll tell the world.

MARY.

[*Takes his arm.*] You know I've never been engaged before.

BUDDY.

You've got nothing on me.

MARY.

[*Looks up in his face.*] I'm the happiest girl in all the world.

BUDDY.

Say, if I'd kiss you would you call for help?

MARY.

You wouldn't need any help.

[*He slowly kisses her.*]

BUDDY.

Say, I made a home run.

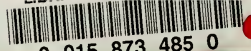
MARY.

Are you happy, Buddy?

BUDDY.

I'll tell the world I am.

SLOW CURTAIN



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